The Audacity of George McGovern *The Editors*

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A Journal of Politics and the Arts — January 30, 1971, 50 cents

Strong-Arm Rule in Canada

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Vietnam and Western Europe

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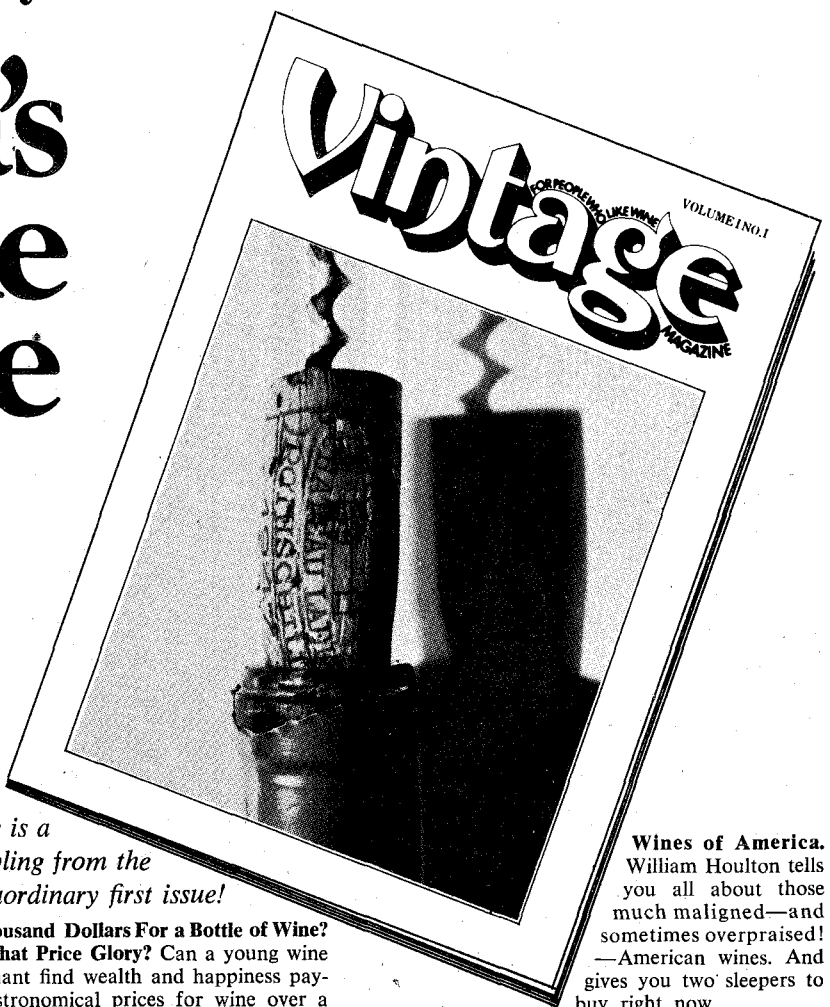

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Balancing Act

It is an animated scene, here on the old C & O canal, with the skaters, the dogs and the children. Skates ring on the ice and occasionally there is deep hollow thump from beneath. Here an impromptu hockey game goes on with branches instead of sticks for in a Southern city everything has to be extemporized. Here a tall fellow from some Northern clime who knows how to skate goes up the canal in firm, long strokes, wheet . . . wheet . . . wheet; around the bend in a moment. Here comes a laughing party from the other direction, walking along the ice and playing tricks with a dog. They throw a stick that skitters far in front. We all laugh as the frantic dog gathers speed awkwardly in his slippery take-off and dashes for the stick – and then slides past in confusion instead of grabbing it (like Tom Dewey losing the election in 1948). But the dog is luckier and gets a second chance and this time he jams his brakes on in time and grabs the stick and comes back prancing and we all cheer.

Nothing like a frosty walk on the old towpath, but I have failed to make allowance for the ice, too; it has all melted and frozen again in lumps and projections, in corrugated spots or in bare places or in simple glare ice that tries to slide me over the bank onto the canal or on the other side down the embankment to the railroad. Yes, it is aggravating; as aggravating as trying to write some obdurate article: you start with a passable first sentence and trip over a participle; or slide on a mixed metaphor, or can't find your way around a synonym, or bounce over some confounded syntactical obstacle. How you envy that chap on fast skates. (What a reporter really likes is a simple, straightaway narrative about a fire, or a murder or a shipwreck, or something cheerful like that, where he can tell the story as fast as he can type, with the Night Final waiting. Yes, and a winter walk should be like that too; brisk and lively with the legs taking care of themselves while you consider the sky and the passing laughter, and the setting sun.)

Well, at any rate, here I was at the last bend and suddenly I could see the Washington Monument glimmering in front of me, far off, pink and glowing. What a lovely sight; it was almost diaphanous there in the city it dominates; not very tall from a distance but rosy and cloudlike and giving the false impression of being within reach.

So now, because this is Washington, let's make a quick shift and come into the auditorium in the New Senate Office Building where a crowd of reporters is gathered, including even some columnists. There is a cluster of maybe 20 microphones fastened like petals to the lectern. And in a minute Senator Muskie steps briskly on stage.

Yes, he has just come back from Europe, Moscow, the Middle East and wherever; yes, he is very obviously a Presidential candidate; no, he is not going to admit any such thing, let alone reveal the intimate details of his talks with world leaders and least of all his four-hour talk with Russian leader Kosygin.

Talk about treacherous walking! It is worse than the ice and snow on the towpath. This is an adversary proceeding as all Washington press conferences are, in which reporters toss him oh-so-innocent questions or try to lure him out on glare ice and then wait with the friendliest feelings to see if he falls on his fanny.

Sen. Muskie knows the game perfectly well; he plants his hands on the lectern; he feels out the questions carefully. He steps over a pitfall on the Arab-Jewish crisis, or pauses a minute to decide the safest path between withdrawing troops from Europe or keeping up the strength of NATO; or he makes a carefully neutral comment about not interfering with State Department while at the same time implying that he knows a thing or two about balance of payments. Now and then he gives a grin that illuminates his big face. But he does not relish the game as Franklin Roosevelt or Jack Kennedy did; there is no élan, and while he walks sure-footed, there is a feeling of caution, and even perhaps, a trace of irritability. It is a long, difficult, treacherous path ahead of him, no doubt about it, and he has cause to tread warily. Whether there is a rosy Monument waiting for him 'round the bend, who can say?

It is different with George McGovern next day. He has announced his candidacy out in South Dakota and has come back for a press conference in a crowded room, the walls of which are jammed with long-haired college types who applaud happily. McGovern has all the advantages of being hopelessly behind; Muskie has all the disadvantages of being way out in front. The first has nothing to lose, the second everything, and must guard himself. McGovern is spontaneous and quiet and likable: he has been against the Vietnam war for years and says so. He is equally earnest, too, on the race issue and poverty. He has natural goodness written all over him. Several writers next day grope for an adjective to describe this little-known contender who got to hating war as a bomber pilot in World War II; it is amusing how they adopt a protective air to the underdog; two of them come up with the same word, "decent." A man can't get elected President unless he forms a coalition, which is why American parties often seem so compromising and meaningless. Muskie is trying to put together a middle-road coalition, which tends to blur what he says; McGovern is just being himself. Our guess is that Muskie has until about midyear – July, say – to see if he can set the grass burning: cool calculation won't do it, we think There has got to be hot anger.

It is Mr. Nixon's big week, too, with his State of the Union speech. Both *Newsweek* and *Life* give him a tough editorial going over before he speaks and hint that he may be a one-term President. Things have certainly changed! A year ago he gave us "the lift of a driving dream" speech in the hopeful heyday of the pre-election Southern Strategy. "We must balance our federal budget," he told us, "so that American families will have a better chance to balance their family budgets." That balance is far off, too – another rosy Monument in the distant afterglow.

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The Audacity of George McGovern

George McGovern will have enough to say for himself in the next 18 months; anything said for or against him now can only be by way of introduction. He sets out to be nominated by the Democrats for the Presidency. He seeks national reconciliation, as do we all, but he seeks that reconciliation through the redress of grievances, through change. Not fundamental change as the more militant New Left conceives it; nevertheless, change that will be called "radical liberal," as the Old Agnew used to say. For instance, Vietnam. Announcing his candidacy last week, McGovern said: "We must have the courage to admit that however sincere our motives, we made a dreadful mistake in trying to settle the affairs of the Vietnamese people with American troops and bombers. . . . There is now no way to end it and to free our prisoners except to announce a definite, early date for the withdrawal of every American soldier. I make that pledge without reservation." Vietnam is one of various controversies on which the Senator from South Dakota has taken a position "without reservation." It is his strength, because the old equivocations are sterile; it is his weakness, because again last week the Democratic Party, in the House of Representatives, showed how unready it is to become a modern party, one that commands the confidence of a disaffected and independent-minded new generation.

At first glance, McGovern's move appears audacious. Not because Mr. Nixon is invincible; on the contrary, he is highly vulnerable. The cities are getting sicker; the war has widened (though American casualties have declined); blacks and whites, young and not-so-young are at odds; unemployment and inflation are rising; and by such nominations as those of Carswell and Haynsworth, the President has lost credit even with conservatives, who were offended by his disregard for quality and his having played Southern politics with the highest tribunal. It takes no audacity to challenge Mr. Nixon. But it takes some daring for a Democrat in January of 1971 to take on Senator Muskie (and in the New Hampshire primary, too), for Muskie has been chosen by the polls and most political writers, prematurely we think, as the certain consensus candidate.

McGovern today is somewhat reminiscent of candidate Estes Kefauver in 1952. They start from behind the goal, they must maneuver end runs around the conventional power blocs and public

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opinion makers, so as to get to the voters themselves. They don't expect to be carried along by charisma. They gather force and following by demonstrations of concern for people and by highmindedness. Now of course, no Democrat who has twice been elected to the House of Representatives and twice to the United States Senate from Republican South Dakota is a barefoot boy, and McGovern is not. But it is one of his attractions that he looks nonprofessional. To many Americans, "politician" has come to signify self-seeking guile, which they distrust. Whether the distrust is a bit of folk wisdom or plain ignorance is beside the point. It is an asset of McGovern's that he conveys a disinterested dedication, the sort that leads a man to step in where more circumspect colleagues fear to tread.

What does McGovern have going for him at the start? Not the labor movement, and that may prove a handicap in states where unions supply many of the primary dollars and foot soldiers. Labor leaders prefer the more regular Senator Muskie or Senator Bayh. McGovern begins with a modest staff. As of mid-January he had only four paid, national campaign workers, though that number will be multiplied several times in coming months. He has to rely on volunteers, many of them former McCarthy and Robert Kennedy fans. One of the most respected men in Washington heads his National Citizens Committee John Douglas, son of the former Senator from Illinoi and himself an Assistant Attorney General unde Robert Kennedy. The Committee vice chairmen ar Blair Clark (McCarthy's campaign manager in '68 and Jean Westwood, Democratic committeewoma from Utah and a Humphrey delegate in Chicago. H has the services of Myer Feldman (former JFK lega counsel) and Henry Kimmelman, an associate of for mer Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. The full time campaign manager is Gary Hart, a young lawye and one-time Colorado organizer for Robert Kennedy Richard Stearnes, a Rhodes scholar and McCarth volunteer in California, is director of political intelli gence. Yancey Martin from Alabama, former deput director of the Democratic National Committee's mi norities division is on the team, along with Gene Po korny from Nebraska (McCarthy midwest field orga nizer), Jeff Smith from New Mexico (Kennedy '68) and Ed O'Donnell, campus contact man from Harvard

It's a committed crowd, and more experienced thai its youth would suggest. It's going to be short of cash especially when the competition becomes keener. Earl money will come from replies to 300,000 letters Sen ator McGovern mailed last week. Most of the peopl on that list had responded last year to an antiwar tele vision appeal by McGovern, Hughes, Goodell an Hatfield. The return will be sufficient to get the can didate off the ground. But McGovern's budget fo 1971 is a half million dollars, and it could go a high as $25 million in 1972, up to the convention The primary route – even if it doesn't take McGover into every one of two dozen or so primaries – is ex pensive in the television age. It will be a more ope route than it was in '68, however, partly because o reforms in the delegate selection process engineere by the McGovern Commission. No prudent forecaste would predict with finality who will last the course In the final three weeks of the campaign, for example four of the most critical primary contests will be hel – Oregon, California, Illinois and New York.

McGovern's is not a futile or frivolous candidacy though it has already been dismissed as that by col umnists and commentators. Nor do we think that he i a "stalking horse" for Edward Kennedy, as many o the "pros" are hinting. At the least, McGovern ha widened his audience. He will not again have to writ a letter to *The New York Times*, as he did som months ago, complaining at being left out of a list o Democratic possibilities. As a formal candidate, he ha the right to demand equal time to reply to any pai tisan use of TV by the President. The press will pa more heed to what McGovern now says. So will Mus kie. It's all to the good, and there's more to come Humphrey and Hughes are hopeful. Bayh is busy "Scoop" Jackson is available. And in other rooms ther are other voices: John Lindsay, John Gardner, Gen McCarthy. It's no one's nomination yet.

McGovern's Prescription

"We are not likely to meet our responsibilities either at home or abroad until we remove the Southeast Asia albatross from our necks. That is the first order of business. Ending the drain of Southeast Asia would relieve part of the inflationary pressure. The taxes of our citizens and revenues desperately needed by our cities and states have been drawn into Washington and wasted on senseless war and unnecessary military gadgets. Each month, Washington wastes enough on military folly to rebuild an American city or give new life to a rural area. A major task of the 1970s is the conversion of our economy from the excesses of war to the works of peace. . . . There would be work for all if we set about the job of rebuilding our cities, renewing our rural economy, reconstructing our transportation system, and reversing the dangerous pollution of our air, lakes and streams. A program of tax and credit incentives, combined with family farm income supports, would not only revitalize rural America but would reverse the flow of people into already congested cities. These tasks call for an expanding economy, an adequate money supply, reasonable interest rates, and the selective use of wage and price guidelines. Beyond these essential economic questions, we must reshape our institutions, our technology, our bureaucracy, and our political process so that they become our servants, not our masters." – *January 18, 1971*

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The Pipeline

First it was the otters and the seals, then the gold and the lumber and the copper and the fish. Now it's oil that's beckoning industry to Alaska. More than a billion dollars has already been invested by big oil to find, lease, explore and drill the major new petroleum fields on the Arctic Coast. Another billion (by conservative estimate) and final federal approval of a 789-mile-long, four-foot-diameter pipeline stand between the oil companies and first returns on their gargantuan investment. After each previous bout of exploitation, the industries have packed up and left behind a trail of spent resources and scarred landscapes. This time, at least, some Alaskans hope they can do better.

The demand that the oil industry and the "boomers" in Alaska who will profit most from the oil rush confront environmental consequences has forced the Interior Department to produce a 189-page "Environmental Impact Statement" that examines in some detail the risks of exploitation. The report, which must be issued in order to comply with the 1969 Environmental Protection Act, spells out the costs: "Impact of the proposed action would extend to many facets of the existing Alaskan environment. Environmental impact on fish and wildlife resources would include some local loss of wilderness . . . disturbance of wildlife and alteration of some fish and wildlife habitat. . . . Many effects would be temporary . . . but others would persist, including those following possible oil pollution accidents which might involve the pipeline route itself and oceanic areas."

The prospect of a major oil spill, either along the pipeline route itself or in salmon-rich Prince William Sound has most distressed environmentalists. The Interior Department does not preclude such accidents. To minimize the danger, Interior has written a set of engineering "stipulations" and will itself oversee nearly all pipeline construction. The state has its own set of laws governing oil shipment and handling, and the combination will do about all that can be done to "reduce foreseeable environmental costs to acceptable levels," as the Interior report says.

What is unacceptable is the secondary damage the oil pipeline will cause. Alaska is still pristine because its climate is too harsh and the price of devastating the land too prohibitive to permit widespread exploitation of the state's mineral resources. Once the pipeline and especially the secondary road that will run along its route are open, all manner of exploration and development are likely from Fairbanks north to the Arctic Ocean. There is at the moment no way for either the federal government or Alaska to prevent pillage. The great oil discovery has opened the door. The promise of large profits practically guarantees enormous new investment.

Neither government has as yet a comprehensive land use plan for Alaska. Operating under archaic mining and homesteading laws, corporate prospectors and developers will follow the pipeline route north seeking their fortune. "A primary environmental impact upon land resources would be the intrusion of this transportation project into what is regarded as the nation's last and largest wilderness area," the Interior Department notes candidly. "While the stipulations mitigate the environmental impact upon other resources, such as fish and wildlife and water quality, it is clearly recognized that no stipulation can alter the fundamental change that development would bring to this area." Northern Alaska, an area nearly twice the size of California, is our largest pure wilderness and some attempt to zone and plan for its preservation is the most modest requirement.

The vast public lands are temporarily protected by a "freeze" dictated by Stewart Udall in 1968. That freeze was extended by Walter Hickel and then again recently by acting Interior Secretary Fred Russell. But it can be lifted as quickly as it was imposed. The freeze was ordered to prevent theft of valuable ancestral lands from the 54,000 Natives who are seeking a just settlement from the US Congress. Once – and if – such a settlement is written into law (the Senate passed a Native Claims bill last year, but the House did not act), the freeze will end. Sen. Henry Jackson (D, Wash.), who drove the bill through the Senate, did attach a five-year legislative land freeze to his measure, requiring total classification and inventory of the land and mineral resources of the state. But it is uncertain that the House will accept such an impediment to the lust of mineral developers. Both branches of the Congress last year killed an Interior Department request for a half-million dollars to begin land planning for the state. Further, a law which authorized the preliminary cataloguing and classification of the lands by Interior's Bureau of Land Management expired last December.

Those who are in a hurry to build the pipeline argue that the line and road right-of-way will use a mere one one-hundredth of one percent of Alaska's 586,000 square miles. Yet without substantial revision of mining and homesteading laws, a thorough cataloguing of the state's lands and resources, a tough zoning policy to forestall willy-nilly exploitation, and a reliable freeze to insure nothing is done until it's done right, the state will be damaged by the pipeline.

And what's the big rush? "Development of the petroleum reserves on the North Slope of Alaska is essential to the strength, growth and security of the United States," the Interior Department concludes. It calculates that by 1985 the US will have to import 55 percent of its oil from abroad. With Alaskan reserves fully developed, that dependence could be reduced to 44 percent. It follows, in Interior's view, that that 11 percent margin is critical to our "strength, growth and security." Perhaps it is – but so is conservation.

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Who Needs Skyscrapers?

For years it's been the ambition of every up-and-coming American city to have a Manhattan-like skyline, to show the world that it's arrived, that it's big time. Politicians, planners, developers point with pride to their tall monoliths, take credit for building the New Boston, the New New Haven, or whatever, and push for ever denser downtowns.

In San Francisco, a city of gently rolling hills and magnificent blue-water vistas, Manhattanization, for obvious aesthetic reasons, is a dirty word. A group of ardent conservationists is currently petitioning for an ordinance that would limit all new construction to six stories, and there's a good chance their initiative will prevail. What's interesting is that the conservationists are not taking a purely aesthetic approach; they're arguing economics and challenging the widespread assumption that skyscrapers are good for a city's pocketbook.

Tall downtown office buildings, the conventional wisdom says, benefit a city in two main ways. They provide jobs, first for construction crews and then for white collar workers. And they spread the local tax burden so that homeowners pay less.

San Francisco's conservationists believe that both these assumptions are off-base. High density downtown development does provide construction jobs, but an equivalent or even larger number of jobs would be created if investment capital and federal funds were channeled into low-income, low density housing. As for the office workers who subsequently occupy the skyscrapers, few of their jobs are new, and many are not city residents but highway-clogging, smog-creating commuters.

Tax considerations also operate in the long run against vertical behemoths. A new skyscraper generates several million dollars in tax revenue annually, but it also places a heavy burden on municipal services – police and fire protection, sewer systems, water supply, garbage collection, parking and transportation facilities. After a certain point the congestion factor offsets economies of scale; per person costs for downtown services go up rather than down, and homeowner taxes rise. Middle-income families then move to the suburbs and become commuters, leaving the remaining residents even more heavily taxed.

Not all the fiscal and physical headaches associated with big city living are attributable directly to skyscrapers; the soaring costs of welfare and education are much more to blame for the cities' present financial plight. But it does seem probable that new skyscrapers do more to aggravate urban aches than to cure them, and it is certainly true that the need for low-income housing is much greater than the need for offices. A taxi ride (or crawl) along almost any New York thoroughfare virtually proves the point. Up goes the World Trade Center and dozens more metallic monsters. Who needs them? The city is already choking, and bankrupt. Far better to tear down a few of the monoliths and build parks. And build brownstones too.

COMING: Ralph E. Lapp's second article on the nuclear plant controversy: power and hot water

Byrd and Boggs

It had been expected that Robert C. Byrd, a former butcher and Klansman from West Virginia, would try to unseat Sen. Edward M. Kennedy as Senate Democratic Whip. But no one expected the attempt to succeed. *Congressional Quarterly* had polled senators just days before the party caucus and concluded that Kennedy was the "clear first-choice favorite, by nearly three-to-one." Kennedy, taking no chances, spent the evening before the vote last week talking to undecided members "just in case." While Byrd is popular among senators for the personal favors he does, his backward political positions (especially on race) seemed to disqualify him. The predictions were wrong. The vote was Byrd 31; Kennedy 24. It was a blow to Kennedy and his partisans that he lost, but what is worse, Byrd won.

It is also too bad Morris Udall of Arizona was turned down by his fellow House Democrats for the job of Minority Leader. The only time progressive Democrats are a majority in the House, or even in the Democratic caucus, is when there are enough of them and there aren't now. But the Leader they did choose, Hale Boggs of Louisiana, is no fossil. If you compare his voting record with that of every other representative from his state, Boggs looks like a red-hot populist. What he is mostly is a sociable fellow who has been in the House for 26 years and been Majority Whip for nine years. The principle of "natural succession" was honored. It probably would not have been honored were Boggs a John McMillan or a Jamie Whitten, but he isn't. He's a Southerner with a Northern accent on

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ace, urban affairs, welfare, education. He enjoys compromise and is practiced at it. He is accommodating, eady to do a good turn, even when there's no visible romise of the favor being returned. He's not the most ıdustrious man in the House, nor the laziest.

Still, the young Turks lost, and badly. Udall had vorking against him not only Boggs' seniority and eniality, but the AFL-CIO. Labor would have preerred James O'Hara of Michigan, but after he was liminated on the first ballot, labor and victory went o Boggs.

Home from the War

Since 1965 about 2,300,000 young Americans have erved in Vietnam, of whom 300,000 have been vounded and 45,000 killed. But not all those fortunate nough to escape injury or death in the field have come hrough unscathed. According to a Harvard psychiarist, Gerald Caplan, who has worked with returning eterans for the Army, a "significant proportion" suffer rom "depression, social alienation, anger and resentnent, emotional irritability, poor control over aggresion, alcoholism, and drug addiction." Ironically, their roblems are exacerbated by the reception they receive t home. This may be cool and distrustful, especially rom some of their more militant and insensitive antiwar peers who were able to obtain educational defernents. But even less excusably, a great many GIs have een released from service abroad only to be recruited, nvoluntarily, in the domestic war against inflation.

On the basis of preliminary data, the unemployment ate for Vietnam veterans in December was close to 11 percent, while for blacks among them the rate was 21 percent. Both rates are materially higher than that or nonveterans of the same age group, reflecting some f the special difficulties ex-servicemen have, among vhich are interruption of work careers and the psyhological hangups to which Dr. Caplan has testified. The higher rates also reflect educational handicaps. In he 20 to 24 year age group, 50 percent of all males n the population at large have had some educational xperience beyond high school. Among Vietnam vetrans, only 17 percent have advanced that far.

The government is not idle; it has broadened and naugurated special aids, which now include a counseling service (*Operation Outreach – Early Word*) run by the Veterans Administration, a vocational training rogram (*Project Transition*) supervised by the Defense Department, plus eligibility for reemployment rights, obfinding services, and education under the GI bill. But significantly and despite subsidies provided under the GI bill, only 15 percent of Vietnam veterans 20 to 29 years old are enrolled in regular schools, compared with 25 percent of nonveterans of the same age. In recent testimony presented to a Senate committee, Dr. Caplan proposed a "transitional" camp in which returning veterans would receive "psychosocial decompression or detoxification" to prepare them for the transition to civilian life.

At least as helpful as all the special facilities that may be provided for veterans would be an economic environment in which opportunities for useful and interesting careers were expanding. Training programs and employment agencies are of little avail when unemployment in general is on the rise. Nor will veterans or others be reassured by this recent White House statement: "We hold to the prediction that this will be the least severe dislocation *in the century* [italics added] as we move from a wartime to a peacetime economy and toward price stability." World War II is something less than a century ago, and in less than one year after the end of that conflict nine million men were demobilized. In not a single month of that year did unemployment rise above 4.9 percent of the labor force; on the average it was kept down to 3.9 percent or less, in 1945 and 1946 as well as in the next two years. The armed forces have been cut by less than 500,000 since President Nixon took office. In that time unemployment has gone up from 3.3 to 6 percent.

Judgment on the Judge

A report published several weeks ago ("Black Power Enclave," January 16), told how, over opposition by a local probate judge, Greene County in Alabama became the first biracial county in the US whose administrative and educational apparatus is dominated by blacks. Since that was written, a federal three-judge panel in Alabama has cited the county's outgoing probate judge for civil and criminal contempt of the US Middle District Court.

Judge J. Dennis Herndon, white, fair-haired and mild-spoken, was the chief political figure in a rearguard action fought by the minority white community of Greene County (81 percent black) over the past ten years. He exercised control over deeds, divorces and mental cases, and served as chairman of the county commissioners. In 1968, when blacks under the National Democratic Party of Alabama banner made their first serious bid for political office, Herndon and his friends around the courthouse square managed to keep six NDPA candidates off the ballot. At first, the US District Court supported his position (Judge Frank Johnson dissenting), saying the blacks were in violation of the Alabama Corrupt Practices Act. But the US Supreme Court reversed that decision two weeks

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before the general election, and ordered that NDPA candidates be listed on ballots all over the state. Every Alabama county except Greene complied. Judge Herndon, who supervises elections, claimed he never heard about the court order. Then in July, 1969, the Supreme Court ordered a special election – the first time the Court has forced such an election. All six black candidates won.

With the ACLU's flamboyant Southern Regional Director, Charles Morgan, Jr., leading the prosecution, testimony on the Herndon contempt motion was heard before three judges in Judge Johnson's courtroom last December. A former US Attorney testified that on the day after the 1968 election, Sheriff "Big Bill" Lee admitted he personally had something to do with keeping the blacks off the ballot. Lee is quoted as saying, after the returns were in, "You see what would have happened. . . . They would have won." Herndon, a graduate of the University of Alabama Law School, repeated that he had never heard about a 1968 Supreme Court decision, though at least a dozen articles on it appeared in Alabama newspapers at the time.

Until Judge Herndon was found in contempt by the three-judge panel, no public official had ever been censured under the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The judges fined Herndon, who stood in a kind of hunched dignity before the federal bench, the maximum $300 (plus almost $5000 court costs) and put him on one year's probation rather than giving him the maximum 45 days in jail. The probationary rules stipulate that "you shall associate only with law-abiding persons and maintain reasonable hours." They prohibit Herndon from leaving his judicial district without permission, which means the former judge will have to call his probationary officer in Montgomery before making a shopping trip to nearby Meridian, Mississippi. He will be taxed another $5452 on back salary, to be paid the six blacks who would presumably have won in 1968 had they been on the ballot.

As reported previously in these pages, the black community of Greene County made a clean sweep in the 1970 elections. The Rev. William McKinley Branch won the probate judgeship, and black Thomas Gilmore, 29, the most promising young politician in the county, won the sheriff's post. On January 18, Gilmore took over the desk scarred for 47 years by the heavy feet of Big Bill Lee, who once billy-clubbed his successor during a sit-in at the county solicitor's office. The County Commission and School Board are all-black.

Their toughest challenge is ahead. Can the new black leadership reunite the community it had to divide to win? One white clerk has already turned down Branch's offer to remain in the probate judge's office. Herndon, who plans to open a private law practice, is expected to refuse Branch's offer to serve as a consultant. Only the new sheriff has succeeded in retaining one white deputy.

The Nixon Watch

Call It Desegregation

At the White House, where modest and often dubiou claims of Administration achievement are regularly trumpeted, the President and his spokesmen didn't say a word on January 14 and in the week thereafte about figures documenting one of Mr. Nixon's rea successes. The President may have been reservin comment on the subject for his State of the Unio speech, but the silence was interesting just the same The subject was the progress achieved in the fall o 1970 in the desegregation of Southern public schools Figures announced on the 14th by HEW Secretary Elliott Richardson showed that some 80 percent o school-age black children in 11 Southern states were i public schools that white children also attended. Th proportion (38.2 percent) of black children in publi schools where most of the pupils were white wa higher in the South than it was anywhere else in th country. Overall, there was less segregated publi schooling in the South than in the North and West. I short, the figures appeared to document the Adminis tration's claim that the South's traditional system o dual and officially segregated public schools had bee to all effects dismantled. On their face, with every discount for the reality behind the statistics, they demonstrated that the issues and the problems in volved in school desegregation had changed funda mentally and for the better, and that the change ha come to a climax in the first two years of Mr. Nixon' Administration.

Secretary Richardson spoke with reason of th "dramatic and unprecedented progress" indicated by his statistics. But his was the sole note of officia jubilation, and his total treatment of the facts at a press conference was restrained. Attorney Genera John N. Mitchell, a principal architect of the Admin istration's desegregation policy and tactics, barely mentioned the matter in a biennial review of his de partment's record. It was as if the Administration would rather have skipped the whole thing, and there should have been no wonder if it had. The Nixon suc cess was not the degree of formal desegregation tha had been accomplished in the South, a process that the President had taken great pains to credit more to the courts than to his own policy and actions. His success was in cozening the white South, in his 1968 campaign for the Presidency and again in the midterm 1970 campaign, into believing that he as President would do what he could to slow if not prevent the completion of the very process that was now, on the face of his Administration's figures, much nearer com pletion than critics of his social policies had thought likely or possible. Viewed politically, and that was the way Mr. Nixon naturally viewed it, the resultant sit-

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uation was downright funny. His own exercise in constructive deception debarred him from claiming anything near full and personal credit for its success, for to do so would have been to confess the deception and thereby to alienate white Southern votes that he and the Republican Party will need to win in 1972. He may be expected now and in the future, as he has done since 1968, to say that his Administration in this matter does only what Congress and the courts require it to do, and to allot the remainder of the credit, as Secretary Richardson did on the 14th, to "the way in which people in the South – black and white alike – have carried out the requirements of the law."

The Administration's current prayer to Congress and to the Supreme Court, expressed in veiled but unmistakable terms, is that "the requirements of the law" not be broadened so as to prohibit segregated schooling that results from residential and other circumstances, rather than from deliberate official action. It is upon the hope that enforceable law and court rulings will continue to be limited to deliberate *(de jure)* rather than to circumstantial *(de facto)* segregation and related racial discrimination that HEW and the Department of Justice base their present posture and their plans to apply the law as it stands in the South and elsewhere. The South still has its own special and aggravated racial problems in its public schools. But the essence of the change signalled by the 1970 figures is that the enforcement problem there is coming to be identical with the problem in the rest of the nation, and that, in a real sense, the problem is even harder to solve than it had been in the 16 years since the Supreme Court ruled that deliberate segregation of public schools by race violates the Constitution.

Secretary Richardson acknowledged that segregated schools, segregated classrooms, and the most outrageous racial discrimination can and do exist within formally desegregated school systems and that, where they are proven to result from deliberate official action, the federal government is obligated to put an end to them. He cited the firing and demotion of black teachers in desegregating Southern systems and schools as one of the obvious and widespread abuses subject to federal penalty; he has had his department's enforcement agency, the Office for Civil Rights, notify school authorities they must treat black and white teachers alike if they are "to remain eligible for federal funds." He has instructed OCR to go into the field and "make a case" wherever complaints or known circumstances suggest that there is a case to be made. The Secretary means it; he is acting in good faith. Yet, given literally hundreds of complaints and other causes for remedial action, his department has moved in only three cases since he took charge of it last summer to terminate the payment of federal funds to offending school districts. One of the reasons is that the Administration, following a policy designed by Attorney General Mitchell, prefers to sue recalcitrant school districts instead of cutting off their federal money by administrative action. The effect and the purpose are to turn public ire from the Administration to the courts and so to minimize the political costs of desegregation. But a corollary fact, as Administration apologists will be arguing from now on, is that "making the case" really does become more and more difficult as formal and declared segregation recedes. The motives behind such practices as the dismissal and demotion of black teachers in the course of reducing desegregated teaching staffs and the in-school grouping of black and white students on the basis of standard scholastic tests have to be proven to the satisfaction of judges and administrators alike, and adequate proof of that kind can be extremely hard to come by.

Stating the difficulties that arise from the changing patterns of segregation and discrimination does not, of course, establish an excuse for delay and passivity in the enforcement of statutory and judicial law. The case against the attitudes and behavior that survive in much of the South, and against the Administration's recent and actual approach to them, is devastating in both detail and effect. Two studies of Southern school discrimination and federal action to deal with it were conducted last fall by the Washington Research Project and five national organizations concerned with civil rights. The studies proved beyond question what journalists and others familiar with the subject already knew: that the $75 million in emergency school funds appropriated by Congress last fall, ostensibly to further Southern desegregation in the 1970-71 school year, was intended to be used and was used mostly as a straight payoff for their minimal compliance with the law. President Nixon's personal order was to "get that money out there" and it was gotten "out there," as often as not in flagrant disregard of the nominal requirement that school districts receiving it abandon or correct any and all forms of racial discrimination in their schools. Forty of 109 complaints that were checked by the Office for Civil Rights were found to be justified, and the offending districts were asked to correct the violations without forcing HEW or Justice to take formal action. A further examination was near completion at HEW last week, with the predictable result that the confirmed violations will be said to be in process of voluntary correction and do not call for revocation of the federal grants. The plea heard in private from federal administrations is that the combination of deception, persuasion and positive enforcement in cases of last resort has worked and is still working, to the extent demonstrated by the federal statistics. So it has and is, with the odd result that Mr. Nixon and his Administration neither care nor dare to claim the credit that in another atmosphere and in other circumstances would be their due.

John Osborne

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Poor Poland

Making Ends Meet

Irony is commonplace in an age of paradox. But it was singularly ironic to hear the news of Polish riots – whose immediate cause was the shortage and high prices of meat – in a *New York Times* radio broadcast sponsored by the importer of Polish ham ("The only ham to win the *Good Housekeeping* magazine commendation"). You can't just walk in and buy ham in a Warsaw store, but you can get it in almost any American supermarket, except some in the Deep South where special, and costly, permits are required to sell "Communist goods." And that's another irony. Polish hogs are raised by noncollectivized individual farmers whose methods are as old as they are inefficient. As did their forefathers, the farmers feed their animals potatoes, leftovers from the table and milk – and not as in Iowa, where the hogs are fattened with a brownish powder that is a mixture of corn and synthetic protein. So ham is not available in a Communist country which always was, and still is, one of the principal agricultural regions in all of Europe. But it sells well ($50 million a year) in the US. And before each holiday, countless parcels are sent from the United States to Poland, containing cans of Polish ham that have the *Good Housekeeping* seal.

The decision by Gomulka to increase food prices *and* the quantity of consumer goods just before Christmas was, as it turned out, incredibly foolish. Expectations were raised that could not be satisfied. What do you do when you need, say, 100,000 tons of meat for city markets, and you get only 10,000? The Russians can get away with this; but the Soviet regime and the Soviet Communist Party, despite a decline in prestige and drive, are still well-organized, well-disciplined. This has never been true in Poland. It is not true today, as reports of continuing protest testify. Open defiance by workers in the shipyards has spread to streetcar employees. And though newspapers in Warsaw have yet to mention the disturbances in the north, worker demands for higher wages and reduction in production quotas have not been withdrawn.

Many foreign observers were surprised that riots in Gdansk, Szczecin and other Baltic cities could have triggered the downfall of Gomulka, and that Moscow so quickly approved the dismissal of its chief supporter in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. The probable explanation for Soviet acquiescence is that Gomulka was beyond saving, and that his successor, Edouard Gierek, is at least as reliable an ally as Gomulka. Before coming back to Poland in 1948, Gierek had been an obscure official of the Belgian Communist Party, in charge of Polish miners working there. On his return, however, and despite Stalinist suspicions of any returnees from the West, Gierek was immediately appointed to important posts and rather rapidly became a quasi-dictatorial ruler of Silesia, one of Europe's most important coal and steel centers. It can be plausibly argued that Gierek could not have moved up so fast without the support of one of the many services of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Poland's new boss is doubtless abler and wiser than the rather lackluster personalities in the Gomulka faction. But the task he and his team face – raising living standards for people who, by all economic indicators, should be among the more affluent of the world – will be extraordinarily difficult if not downright impossible. The trouble with the Communist economy, in Poland even more so than elsewhere in Eastern Europe, is not only that many of its doctrines are unrealistic, but that so many day-to-day decisions are plain stupid, causing permanent confusion and recurring breakdowns. Gierek presides over a society which has learned that hard work is no guarantee that ends will be met, a society where theft of public property "takes care" of an important percentage of the gross national product (according to some estimates, probably exaggerated, about 20 percent of the output of Polish factories and other state-owned enterprises "evaporates").

Poland is still largely an exporter of basic commodities – coal to Western Europe, ham to the United States. These two commodities are the country's chief earners of "convertible currencies," so greatly preferred by Communist economic planners to the "units of exchange" in which all trade accounts through CONECOM (the Soviet bloc economic cooperation organization) are being settled. In order to have coal for export, the Warsaw regime has bribed its Silesian miners, allocating to them more food at the expense of workers in other parts of the country. What Gierek was able to do in Silesia he will not be able to do in Warsaw. Poland, like Czechoslovakia and the USSR, seems condemned to many more years of privation.

The Polish riots and the downfall of Gomulka inevitably affect Soviet policies. We were a bit too hasty in concluding that the Russians, having stabilized conditions in their East European sphere of influence, would actively seek general stabilization on the European continent, so as to have a free hand in dealing with the Chinese. The first priority of the Soviet regime, it now appears, is not an agreement with Bonn, perhaps not even a settlement of the Middle East crisis or a detente with the United States; it is to assure that situations like those which arose last month in Gdansk, and which swept from power a group unconditionally faithful to the Kremlin, do not flare up again. After a decade and a half of a world-oriented foreign policy, Moscow is being forced to pay more attention to business in its backyard, from the Elbe river to the shores of the Pacific.

Philip Ben

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The War Measures Act and Its Aftermath

Strong-Arm Rule in Canada

by Roger Neville Williams

Montreal

Soldiers with submachine guns patrolled the alley behind my apartment and I had to pass between them to put the garbage out. The soldiers could stop, search and arrest anyone they chose. Across Carré St. Louis, where I live, the police took a young man out of his house in handcuffs, and carried out boxes of books after him. Around the corner, the *Presse Populaire* (community job printer – IWW) was locked up and the staff arrested. Nearby, the *Librairie Ho Chi Minh* was shuttered. A few streets away, the office of the English "underground" paper, *Logos*, whose politics never went beyond poetry and brown-rice recipes, was raided, the staff arrested, the typewriters and presses smashed and all stock confiscated. Police confiscated the page-plates and the delivery truck of *Quatier Latin*, the glossy student weekly magazine of the University of Montreal. Quebec under the War Measures Act was nightmarish, and many wondered who was next.

The experience was especially unsettling to the large community of American exiles here. Not that their security was jeopardized; the emergency powers, invoked to deal with the kidnapping of labor minister Pierre LaPorte and British trade commissioner James Cross, did not permit deportation. (There were several cases of *extradition* of other US fugitives during the crisis, but deserters and draft resisters are not extraditable.) Rather, the fear stemmed from discovering on the morning of October 16 that the country chosen as a refuge and whose government all praised for its tolerance had suddenly, without warning, decreed a police state. We weren't awakened at five AM by a knock at our door as 453 Canadians were, but when we later discovered what happened to Canada, our shock was almost as great as if we had been. For the American Deserters' Committee and the Montreal Council to Aid War Resisters, the shock was enough to drive them underground for several weeks.

Activities which were previously perfectly legal were outlawed and hundreds of people were now in jail for having retroactively illegal sympathies. Writers, poets, singers, journalists, professors, lawyers, editors, students, publishers and politicians were rounded up with a terrifying efficiency and a fury that one cannot imagine in a democratic country. Although the War Measures Act (WMA) permitted counsel for every detainee, the police systematically denied them that right for the first two weeks. We knew nothing about the hundreds arrested, for the press refused to print anything at all about them. It was the censorship of the press which was, perhaps, the most distressing thing about the dark autumn of 1970.

All across the country, not only Quebec, Canada's staunchly liberal media *censored itself*. Editorials called for total support of the government. It was eventually revealed that the Prime Minister's cabinet had dissuaded him from applying the censorship provisions of the WMA and the justice minister said there had been no official control of the media. There *had* been control, and it came from two sources: frightened editors, and the police. Papers and TV and radio stations which weren't doing a good job of keeping mum during the crisis, were informed by the police that they would be subject to prosecution if they didn't fall into line. Only one paper in Quebec, *Quebec Presse*, had the courage to print a list of the detainees and to interview people after they had been released. The paper was not prosecuted, leaving all the other media in the embarrassing position of trying to defend the self-censorship. The only opposition in print for several months in the English press was several academic discussions by scholarly writers of the potential dangers of emergency powers. At one radio station, a popular morning-show disc jockey refused to be shackled by his company's decision to avoid broadcasting any discussion of the events in Quebec, and he was summarily asked to resign. Known to be steadfastly anti-FLQ and even antiseparatist, he was nevertheless considered too dangerous for the airwaves.

James Eayrs, probably the most brilliant columnist writing in Canada today, said in a syndicated piece, "Who could have imagined such revelling in the restrictions placed upon our freedom, such reviling of those who speak against them? . . . The cry for unity in crisis may be well-intentioned; it does democracy no good. 'We cannot afford the luxury of division. Unite behind our leaders' so one lemming shouts to another as they swim together out to sea and immolation."

Meanwhile, we were in the dark. No one knew what

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the government intended, what was happening to the 400 detainees, what abuses of power were occurring. Student newspapers as far away as Lethbridge, Alberta, had their plates seized when they attempted to print the manifesto of the *Front de Liberation du Quebec*, merely as information, as the stated program of the revolutionaries. Reprinting of FLQ communiqués was expressly forbidden. Marc Carboneau, one of James Cross's abductors, later explained that his cell had tried to communicate with the cell holding Pierre LaPorte, wishing to indicate, indirectly, that he should not be killed. Their communiqué was not released by the police. It was as if the government was sincerely afraid of a popular uprising if the public were to learn of the FLQ aspirations in behalf of the working-class expressed in each communiqué (the manifesto mentioned the 450 LaPalme postal drivers who lost their jobs in 1970 as a result of post office mismanagement). Although the labor movement in Quebec is left-oriented, there is very little sympathy among the people of Quebec for the FLQ and violent revolution. One even wonders if the workers want separation for Quebec. Radical separatist and trade union president, Michel Chartrand, representing 68,000 men in Montreal, was arrested and charged with seditious conspiracy. He is still in prison and has received a one-year contempt sentence for an outburst at his judicial hearing when bail was unfairly denied. There have been no demonstrations for his release.

I lived as a draft-refusing fugitive in the US before coming to Canada, and I can honestly say that I was never then as afraid of the authorities as I was in Quebec in October. In the US there would have been bail, court-proceedings, appeals, and a degree of support from the movement had I been arrested. And, one is innocent until proven guilty. One can never really appreciate these safeguards until they are taken away and one is at the mercy of police suspicion. Under the provisions of the WMA, the defendant is forced to prove his innocence before the authorities who consider every suspect guilty. I was innocent enough, but learning of people in prison who were equally innocent was not comforting. The American exile group with which I had been associated had openly supported the Quebec independence movement, and so when members of the Vietnamese Patriots Association (NLF supporters with whom the exile group had close relations) were arrested, activist American exiles assumed they would be next. Fortunately, they were not.

I support neither the FLQ nor Quebec separation. The FLQ has always seemed somewhat absurd, though an understandable product of Quebec poverty and backwardness. Separation would likely center more on right-wing nationalism than on independent socialism. The separatist *Parti Quebecois* wants to encourage more American investment, something which the Canadian left and the New Democratic Party (democratic socialist, holding 15 parliamentary seats) resolutely oppose. In a letter to the *Montreal Star*, an American exile wrote, "1970 is a bit late for avenging Montcalm, especially as the price of such a fantasy would be the total erosion of an already imperiled Canada, and eventually of Quebec itself."

Nonetheless, there is a very real struggle in Quebec, a province suffering under hugely unfair language discrimination and 10 percent unemployment. Thirteen to 15 percent unemployment is predicted and if the government of Canada does nothing about it, then Quebec, however unrealistically, may ultimately opt for choosing its own destiny, one way or another. Separation may not be the answer, but it is more of an answer than the federal ministers have come up with.

While doing precious little to aid this province in any substantive way, the federal government used its influence to destroy all opposition to the status quo in Quebec. One week before the first Montreal municipal election in eight years, which unpropitiously took place during the autumn crisis, a federal minister announced that the city's only opposition party, the newly formed *Front d'Action Politique* (FRAP), a worker and community-based civic organization, was similar in aims and tactics to the FLQ. (FRAP's campaign materials had already been confiscated by police and the popular FRAP posters all over the city had quickly disappeared.) *The New York Times* ran an interview with FRAP candidate, Dr. Henri Bellmare, after his five days in jail without explanation or charge. But in Montreal, the English press printed nothing about him, and only weakly defended FRAP as an honest non-violent, social-action party. Mayor Drapeau was returned to his office with 93 percent of the vote.

The insensate fear of the FLQ continued in full force through the end of November. Jean Marchand, a close friend of the Prime Minister and the federal minister responsible for the public denigration of FRAP had said there were 3000 armed revolutionaries ready to stage a coup, blow up public buildings, and take over the government of Quebec. Testimony of Bernard Lortie, the first of the murder suspects to be captured, revealed that his cell was so weak and disorganized that they had to take money from Pierre LaPorte to send out for fried chicken. The *Montreal Star* allowed a writer to point out that the FLQ is not a conspiracy, but simply "whoever chooses to brand themselves with three letters." An English Canadian journalist who had been arrested said, "They [the police] seem to think that every demonstration, every bomb that goes off and of course the kidnappings, are all part of the PLOT directed by a Comrade Big." The most telling commentary on the FLQ came from James Cross himself on the day of his release when he told lawyer Bernard Mergler, "It was just a case of six kids trying to make a revolution."

There are certain elementary observations which seem to have gotten lost in the national frenzy. After

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the release of James Cross and the arrest of the cell members suspected of murdering LaPorte, the government assumed a victory, but it was Pyrrhic. It requires only a rudimentary grasp of the mentality of dedicated, violent revolutionaries (be they revolutionary thugs or revolutionary intellectuals) to understand that the FLQ cell holding LaPorte was bound to murder him after the government invoked uncompromising emergency powers and outlawed the revolutionary organization. (Francis Simard later testified, "We had to do it.") Young radicals – especially American exiles who have witnessed revolutionary violence in their own country, sometimes even supporting it, at least understanding it – were not surprised when police found LaPorte's body 20 hours after the implementation of the WMA. The government was surprised, however, and leaders expressed "profound shock." The cowardly, cold-blooded assassination of Pierre LaPorte might never have occurred had the government of Quebec acted firmly, but without panic and excessive force. (Once the province of Quebec requested federal enactment of the extraordinary powers, Prime Minister Trudeau, in the name of federalism and his own party, which is also in power in Quebec, had little choice but to grant it. It is to Trudeau's credit that he took full responsibility; yet it seems hardly commendable that, except for the occasional inflammatory comment, he afterward remained reticent throughout the affair.) With LaPorte's death and grand funeral, the governments of Montreal, Quebec, and Canada thereafter denounced the FLQ as cold-blooded assassins against whom the emergency powers and military mobilization were necessary. If the FLQ had murdered LaPorte *before* the government had called out the troops and enacted the WMA, the denunciation might have been more justified. The government's strong-arm tactics had unleashed across the country every conceivable antidemocratic human impulse. The ugly mood in this previously tolerant country went beyond McCarthyism and Agnewism, and responsible leaders played on it.

Jerome Choquette, Quebec's minister of justice, discussing the media, said, "It is time to reexamine freedom of expression in Quebec." The justice minister was also calling for a compulsory ID card system with photographs and fingerprints (the proposal is being seriously considered by the Quebec government); Quebecers, he said, must have identity cards "to help police maintain order in this province, and because it would give the government easier methods of control." The chief intelligence officer for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police informed a Toronto civic club that immigration had to be tightened up to keep out American radicals who come to stir up trouble. Mayor Tom Cambell in Vancouver wanted the Act used in his province against "hippies, yippies, and draft dodgers." Prime Minister Trudeau, speaking on CBS' "Sixty Minutes," said, ". . . if these instigators [Canadian revolutionaries] are going to find their milieu on the campuses, then stricter measures will have to be taken to control them." And in Quebec a popular member of the national assembly (Quebec legislature) called for a return of the death penalty, compulsory military service for the young, obligatory ID cards, severe control over demonstrations, "virile censorship" of the press, a "decontamination" of radio, TV and the written press, and a "cleansing" of all university faculties. With public officials indulging in such pronouncements, it was not surprising that a national poll revealed that 87 percent of Canadians supported the use of the War Measures Act, that 51 percent said they wanted it used against "all student militants," and that 50 percent said they would support government censorship of the press.

During the hysteria, teachers were fired in Ontario and British Columbia for discussing the FLQ in their classrooms; British Columbia hastily passed a law forbidding "political instruction" in public schools. In Quebec, the police seized 110,000 issues of *Scanlan's* magazine, which had been printed here when US printers refused to handle it, and held it for two weeks. Newspapers disappeared from the newsstands; distributors had been warned by police not to handle "revolutionary materials" and one distributor, an American deserter, had all his stock confiscated and was threatened with deportation (an illegal threat) if he chose to reopen his business. Only the *Village Voice* is left at two downtown newsstands – previously it could be purchased all over the city, as could all the North American "underground" papers.

The federal government spent most of November defending its new Public Order Act (POA) in parliament. It had asked for opposition and then paid no heed to it and the resulting bill, emergency legislation supposedly providing "less sweeping powers" than the offensive War Measures Act, actually gave police the same powers as the WMA. The POA passed easily and will not expire until April 30. The public has been convinced that it is both a necessary and minimal response to public disorder.

It is hardly minimal, however, in its suspension of civil rights: police can arrest on suspicion only (an amendment changing it to "probable and reasonable grounds" was defeated), and hold suspects for seven days – 20 days if a judge permits – without charges or bail. Husbands and wives of suspects are automatically subject to arrest as "accessories"; search and seizure of "seditious material" is permitted. Vague censorship provisions permit prosecution of any medium which the justice department feels is presenting material and information "in behalf of" rather than "about" a revolutionary organization. Most repressive of all – creating an atmosphere of prior restraint – is the retroactivity clause permitting prosecution of anyone who was a member of a radical group which one day *may* be outlawed. Canada has a national police force, unlike

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the US, and it carries commensurate weight in policy decision. The police in Canada could forseeably begin to play a *political* role. Several serious crises in the years ahead could render the POA permanent. Temporary legislation all too often becomes common law.

I wrote the above paragraph on January 4. On January 7 Quebec's Premier Bourassa announced that his government would seek "permanent legislation of a modified Public Order Act" before the temporary bill expires. No doubt it will be about as "modified" as the POA was "less sweeping."

As an American, I have little room to speak; yet in the United States, if one can discount Spiro Agnew, the government – state and federal – does not officially sanction repression on a massive scale despite the current widespread violence and disorder. Civil liberties remain officially intact, even if there is *de facto* repression, and revolutionaries like Fred Hampton are murdered in their beds. What is disturbing about these recent events in Canada is that massive repression and suspension of civil rights was official, emanating from the Prime Minister himself. It is a dangerous precedent to set, and one wonders what will happen to freedom in Canada should the people one day elect a Prime Minister from the right who (ironically) has no record as a civil libertarian. An outspoken, left-wing critic of the government, who publicly opposed the WMA at a rally in Ottawa, recently informed his audience on a Toronto TV show that whatever Americans found reprehensible about the Canadian government's actions should at least be understood in Canadian terms. "Canadians," he said, "trust their government; whereas Americans, traditionally since Patrick Henry and Jefferson, have never liked government. This partly explains the average Canadian's lack of opposition to the suspension of civil liberties." But will trust in government, and whatever firm measures it wishes to adopt be confused with a benign acceptance of authoritarianism, of which the people of Quebec, at any rate, have seen too much during their long history?

Growing Doubts about American Reliability

Vietnam and Western Europe

by Stanley Hoffmann

American policy makers, in the Nixon as well as in the Johnson Administration, have said repeatedly that any negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war which would establish a coalition government, or any other outcome tantamount to an outright abandonment of South Vietnam to the Communists (such as a precipitate withdrawal of all American forces) would be interpreted by our allies as a betrayal of US commitments. Despite years of involvement and tens of thousands of American dead, having thus sacrificed one of its allies, the United States could no longer be trusted and the America's network of alliance would snap. Do our European partners see the war in the light presented by Washington? Let us examine the three main European powers: England, West Germany, and France, two of which have a long and deep experience of Southeast Asian affairs, and one of which has made dependence on the American alliance the cornerstone of its postwar policy.

The public statements of British governments – the Wilson cabinet and now Mr. Heath's cabinet – have always been "understanding" and often approving of American policies. No British government has yet repudiated the line set by Churchill during World War II: the role Great Britain can still play in the world is that of an influential ally and adviser of the United States. Only by acting as a loyal supporter could England expect both to get her own vital interests acknowledged and protected by the US and to succeed in influencing the global course of American foreign policy. Even though in two instances at least vital English interests were disregarded by the United States (at the time of Suez and in the Skybolt affair), even though it is hard to prove that English advice has had a significant impact on American statecraft, there has as yet been no "agonizing reappraisal" of a policy that has allowed Britain to develop a nuclear force with American help, to pass on her interests in the Eastern Mediterranean to the United States, and to flatter herself with the belief that various summit meetings took place thanks to her efforts.

Britain's own interest in a non-Communist Southeast Asia – an interest which she successfully protected during years of guerrilla fighting in Malaya – also ex-

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plains why American arguments against a hasty retreat from Vietnam or against a settlement along the lines laid down by Hanoi have often found an echo in England. For many years, *The Economist* managed the feat of producing polished and reasonable versions of American stands which their American defenders in the government, in Congress, or in the academic world, more often than not had made appear absurd. Concerned with the stability of fragile countries – Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Burma – and with the survival of Singapore, the British governments, along with many former colonial administrators, military and foreign policy experts, have sympathized with the American determination to save South Vietnam from Communist conquest. No nation that had once supported Munich is quite immune to the domino theory afterwards – even if the Munich analogy is misleading and the domino theory dubious.

Nevertheless, British support has always been qualified. American policy has had two faces – a tough (and real) one, a soft (and vague) one. War was being waged with hideous means but the purpose was said to be a negotiated settlement. Britain has on the whole downplayed the horrors and upgraded the positive by picking up all references to peace and compromise. The first Indochina war ended in 1954, in Geneva, largely thanks to Sir Anthony Eden's efforts. British governments have always hoped that the Geneva precedent could be repeated, and that once negotiations began between the belligerents the huge gap between Hanoi's demands and America's preference for a South Vietnam in which the NLF would accept a minority status would somehow be reduced. The Wilson government patiently tried to get such negotiations started, and welcomed the bombing halts of 1968.

It has since become apparent that the gap has not narrowed, Britain's embarrassment has become more acute. On the one hand, there is still a feeling that public criticism and proddings would do no good – and it is not in the style of British policy. Moreover, the Heath cabinet is committed to slowing down the final retreat from East of Suez: a determination to remain minimally present in Southeast Asia which would hardly be comparable with a sudden shift against America's Vietnam policy. On the other hand, three factors tend to make British officials and elites privately very critical of this policy. First, there is the obvious and shocking impact of Vietnam on American domestic and foreign affairs; the sense that the obstinate pursuit of a valuable but limited interest has been allowed to jeopardize far more important concerns, such as domestic harmony, or the need for a more far-sighted East Asian policy and for a coherent Middle Eastern policy. Secondly, there is the unpopularity of the Vietnam war to many of the British, especially the youth. Third, there is the new priority of entry into Europe – and the realization that above and beyond the purely economic aspects of the Common Market, there is in the European enterprise a political ambition: that of allowing Western Europe to speak, gradually, with one voice in matters of defense and diplomacy. The British elites know that Britain's chance of admission will remain small if Britain speaks in the same language as Washington, on these matters.

One could sum up Britain's position at present as follows. There continues to be much sympathy for the American objective – a non-Communist South Vietnam. But there is increasing doubt that the quest for this goal is worth the effort. "Vietnamization" was approved because it seemed a step toward extrication, because British counterinsurgency experts (like Sir Robert Thompson, so highly appreciated in Washington) were convinced that the very scope of America's massive involvement doomed the enterprise of isolating and destroying the guerrilla, and because one could hope that negotiation would result. With the Paris talks stalled, and the memory of Cambodia – the awareness that as long as the war lasts, it risks getting larger – there is growing desire for a new effort to close the gap in Paris. For the only alternative is continuing American entrapment, which the British deem disastrous. They may agree with Mr. Nixon that a hasty "bug-out" would be shameful and damaging; they do not agree that his own past policy constitutes the sole alternative to such a debacle. And they certainly do not see in Vietnam a test of America's will and alliances everywhere.

The Federal German Republic, in contrast with France and Britain, and like Italy, has had no worldwide foreign policy since 1945: its political and strategic interests (I am not referring to its industrial and commercial ones) are concentrated in Europe. Moreover, unlike Italy, West Germany's whole existence has been dominated by an international issue – the "German question." It was under the auspices of the Western Allies that the Federal Republic was established, and Bonn has sought both its security and the restoration of its sovereignty in a close alliance with the United States.

Chancellor Erhard and his foreign minister, Schröder, were determined not to let anything or anyone interfere with the priority given to the American alliance and to NATO; hence their opposition to de Gaulle, who had partially seduced Adenauer. Bonn's Founding Father had had frequent misgivings about the wisdom of Washington (especially in the Kennedy years), and little regard for England. De Gaulle's vision of a "European Europe" had appealed to him. Erhard rejected it; he and Schröder wanted England in the Common Market, so as to make it more like a free-trade area, and so as to strengthen Europe's bonds with the United States. At the same time, the United

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States, eager to isolate de Gaulle, courted West Germany. Bonn was determined to hold America's hand, so as to be sure that America would always hold its own hand should there be trouble with the Russians or their satellites, and so as to avoid what had happened in 1961 at the time of the Berlin Wall. Consequently, Bonn endorsed American actions in Vietnam, and its officials often stated that Vietnam was the proof of American determination to carry on its commitments: Saigon and Berlin were two links in the free world's chain under American protection.

Ironically, what de Gaulle could not do was achieved by Mr. MacNamara. It was largely his pressure on Bonn, over the issue of German financial contributions to the cost of American troops in Europe, which brought down the Erhard cabinet and resulted in a subtle change of German policy. In this second phase, from the end of 1966 to mid-1969, the so-called Grand Coalition Cabinet of Chancellor Kiesinger, with Willy Brandt as foreign minister, cautiously shifted priorities in two areas. In Western Europe, there was a new attempt at cooperation with France – not so much as to endanger NATO, yet carried out even though de Gaulle had taken France out of the military structure of the Atlantic Alliance. In Eastern Europe, there was an "opening to the East," an attempt at reconciliation with Poland and Czechoslovakia, a policy of "peaceful engagement" which no longer made of reunification a prerequisite of detente. To be sure, this policy had Washington's blessing. But Washington had hoped to pursue it along with (if not ahead of) Bonn, and soon discovered that Vietnam was thwarting such hopes – partly because of the East Europeans' coldness to American overtures in the years of American bombing of North Vietnam, partly because Vietnam diverted most of Washington's energies. The West Germans, however, persisted (with very mixed results).

The new German policy assumed that the threat from the East was no longer so overwhelming as to bury diplomacy under strategy, that security through NATO could now be reconciled with active detente in the East, and that the "situation of strength" established by NATO was in itself, despite years of mythology, incapable of guaranteeing either reunification or a rapprochement with Eastern Europe that might lead to reunification some day. This policy shift was due in large part to a feeling induced by Vietnam. The United States was still the main anchor, but its involvement in the Far East was seen as lessening its effectiveness in Europe. Under those circumstances, it was up to the Europeans to pursue their own interests. While de Gaulle and the West Germans remained separated by their respective positions on NATO and on British entry, in those years they got closer together through a shared sense of relative American irrelevance. Even if theoretically, America's stand in Saigon showed up the value of all US commitments, practically America's entrapment meant an American absence from Europe's politics. When the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia – partly in angry reply to Bonn's new line – Washington's absence, indeed its silence, were noted and resented in Bonn. The West German Ambassador still refrained from criticizing policy in Washington. But praise stopped.

The third phase began with the new cabinet of Chancellor Brandt, in September 1969. The Christian-Democrats, America's most constant supporters, were now in opposition. Brandt's loyalty to NATO has of course been made plain; security remains an imperative of any West German cabinet. But the new government has made spectacular moves in two directions less pleasing to Washington. There has been, at the conference of The Hague in Dec. 1969, a *relance* of West European cooperation, largely initiated by Brandt. In exchange for the lifting of their veto against Britain, the French obtained the promise and the performance of various agreements (notably in agriculture), all of which tend to make of the Common Market a more coherent and powerful economic competitor of the US. In Eastern Europe, the new West German policy has been aimed not only at resuming the effort of reconciliation with Poland, but at reaching agreements with East Germany (hitherto ignored or approached with great diffidence and with the Soviet Union (recognized, as de Gaulle had argued, as the real key to the East European scene). Although Washington has approved of the general direction, there have been serious misgivings about the speed, the implications and the possible effects of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. This deliberate assertion of West German initiative is based on something more than the somewhat regretful realization of America's temporary incapacity due to Vietnam. Now, there is a widespread feeling that, while the US can still be counted as the ultimate protector in case of a major European crisis, the domestic and international impact of Vietnam has actually weakened the role of the US in European affairs in ways that could be harmful for its allies. It is because of the backlash from Vietnam that American troop reductions in Europe are deemed likely, thus obliging the West Europeans (and primarily the West Germans, most exposed) either to raise the levels – and costs – of their own defenses, or to accept a unilateral and uncompensated weakening of NATO. Thus, it is imperative for the West Europeans to develop their own policies and for the West Germans to establish with their Eastern neighbors good and active relations, even if this effort deprives NATO, in effect, of any role in the detente.

Strange as it may seem, Brandt's forceful policy can be seen as a belated West German variety of Gaullism – if the Americans are stupid enough to muddle their priorities, it is up to the Europeans, singly and together, to look after themselves. It used to be the West Europeans who feared that the US in its effort at

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reaching an accommodation with the USSR, would recognize formally the divisions of Europe. It is now the US which fears that the Bonn-Moscow agreement acknowledging the *status quo* could jeopardize the Western victors' rights in Berlin! Of course, there is nothing inherently or necessarily wrong about the *Ostpolitik*. But because of Vietnam, it takes place exactly in that context of American eclipse which de Gaulle had called for, and, in turn, the conditions and consequences of that eclipse make it easier for the Russians to extract as the price for detente that explicit recognition of their East European *imporium* which has been their aim ever since the end of World War II (and which de Gaulle had wanted to avoid). Should Washington talk out too strongly to Bonn, Bonn's reply would all too obviously be: given your own passivity on the diplomatic scene, and your own lassitude with the burdens of NATO – two by-products of Vietnam – what other choice did we have?

The French position has been clear-cut and unchanging. Never was the American argument about the indivisible credibility of US pledges accepted in Paris. With a long and somewhat cold, or cynical, view of alliance history, the French believe that whether a nation carries out or reneges on a pledge is determined by its own assessment of its vital interests. A retreat from Vietnam would not undermine America's commitment to Europe, as long as the defense of Europe is deemed essential in Washington. On the other hand, the actual way in which this commitment would be carried out has always seemed uncertain to the French (much to Washington's annoyance) – not because of the impact of Vietnam, but because, even earlier, the end of America's monopoly in the nuclear field, and the coming of the era in which each super-power can annihilate the other, have undermined the US guarantee to Europe.

French criticisms have often been dismissed as *Schadenfreude:* where the French had failed, the Americans simply couldn't (or shouldn't) succeed; isn't it funny to see the Americans bogged down, after all the advice they had given the French on getting out of Algeria? Actually, there has been very little gloating. The politicians of the far Right, former settlers emigrated from North Africa, who had been most vociferously opposed to France's decolonization, and most indignantly chauvinistic about American anti-colonialism, have been the only forces sympathetic to America's anti-Communist stand in Vietnam. French criticisms have also been dismissed either as a continuation of that left-wing, often fellow-travelling anti-Americanism so prevalent in the intelligentsia, with its inclination to interpret every American move as part of an imperialist design, or else as a convenient ploy used by de Gaulle in his devious battle for French grandeur against "Anglo-Saxons." It is true that the war in Vietnam has been a godsend both for anti-American intelligentsia and for de Gaulle's grand design. But there is much more to the French position.

The French regime, by contrast with British or German cabinets, never deplored Vietnam because the war inhibited American diplomacy or strategy in other parts of the world. De Gaulle, in his struggle against "the two hegemonies," was most eager to see America's shadow across the world shortened (although he never wished American forces out of Europe in the present phase of world affairs). While Pompidou has given up much of de Gaulle's militancy (already curbed by the General after the troubles of May 1969), he too shows no desire for greater American activism in Europe. The French position is based on a continuing and intimate awareness of the political realities of Indochina. French contacts with North Vietnam have been encouraged by the Fifth Republic, and the men (like Jean Sainteny) with the longest experience in dealing with Hanoi have also tried to be of help, persistently and discreetly, in making negotiations between Washington and Hanoi possible. Until the fall of Sihanouk, French influence in Cambodia was very strong, and in Phnompenh as well as in Paris the French established relations with members of the NLF. They also had good relations with the beleaguered head of the Laotian government, Prince Souvana Phouma. While their critique of the American war effort and de Gaulle's foreign policy statements resulted in a deterioration of France's position in South Vietnam, especially in the Thieu-Ky era, there remained in South Vietnam a sizable French community.

The French do not deny the force of American arguments about the domino effect of a Communist takeover of South Vietnam (and now Cambodia) on the rest of Southeast Asia, or about the prospects of a bloodbath in Saigon, or about the absence of any visible sympathy for the NLF among many South Vietnamese. What the French remain deeply skeptical about, is Washington's capacity to impose the political solution preferred by the US. If there were a good chance for a stable, largely self-sustaining and reasonably peaceful non-Communist South, the French would have no grounds for opposing such an outcome. But they doubt that this chance exists. They point to the determination of North Vietnam and the Vietcong to keep fighting as long as necessary. North Korea, to use a misleading parallel often invoked in Washington's wishful thinking, simply did not have this determination in the early 1950s. It is buttressed by the still considerable military resources of Hanoi – a factor that distinguishes this particular war from the two guerrilla wars often cited as hopeful precedents because they were lost by the Communists: Greece and Malaya. The North Vietnamese and Vietcong confidence in outlasting those whom they consider as merely the last in a long series of foreign invaders has impressed and convinced the French.

The French do not believe, moreover, that the Sai-

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gon regime (in contrast with South Korea's' for instance) has the capacity to rule effectively without a massive American presence. It is essentially a military dictatorship, imposed on the South Vietnamese from the top. The lack of a popular base in the cities and in the villages, the arbitrary and brutal nature of the rule, and its frequent corruption, are such as to allow the Vietcong infrastructure to persist. Whatever the military effectiveness of the Saigon regime in the present phase (when the Vietcong and North Vietnamese are relatively inactive, either in order to recoup past losses or in order not to disrupt American withdrawals), politically the NLF remains the only effective organized and nationalist force in the South. The French – unlike many Americans – see in the Indochina War essentially a political contest: the control of the cities by the Americans and their allies is less significant than the opportunities given to the Communists to recruit soldiers and supporters, especially in the countryside, and sympathizers among the urban refugees and victims of inflation and disruption. In this respect the French do not see Cambodia as an American success but as a move that has resulted in an American obligation to support two politically fragile regimes instead of one.

Consequently, the French see only two possibilities. One is, almost literally, perpetual war, to keep the Communists from extending their control, which the French expect them to enlarge as American withdrawals continue. The French do not believe that Saigon could carry the burden alone. In the absence of a political solution, there would have to be a continued American involvement, certainly in the form of massive air support and probably a sizable body of ground soldiers and advisers. The other possibility is a negotiated settlement – but here the French position is drastically different from that of the Nixon Administration. They did not believe that the earlier American call for free, supervised elections in South Vietnam would be acceptable to the other side; in a country such as South Vietnam, after years of war and centuries of undemocratic rule, elections are won by whoever runs them. The French also do not believe that Hanoi and the NLF will ever accept the "Finnish solution" often hoped for in Washington and suggested by Mr. Nixon on October 7, 1970, a permanent minority status. They do not believe that the vague scheme once suggested by Henry Kissinger – a deal negotiated by Saigon and the NLF, to restore gradually a political process in the South, thus leaving each side with a chance to prevail at the end – will appeal to Hanoi and the Vietcong, as long as the Thieu-Ky regime rules Saigon. For Hanoi had precisely accepted such an open-ended formula in the Geneva agreements of 1954, and found itself on the losing side because of American support for Diem. Nor do the French believe that the other side – whose main asset is its capacity to fight – would consider a cease-fire before the basic underlying issues of the war are resolved.

As the French see it, the stake of the war is the political control of Indochina. To keep Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam out of Communist hands, there is only one way – continuing war, a harrowing prospect, since "victory" would require the elimination of North Vietnam (a move whose international consequences have intimidated both the Johnson and Nixon Administrations), while the maintenance of the North Vietnamese sanctuary on the one hand, and the horrors inflicted by the war on the population of the South on the other, insure the perpetuation of the "other side's" forces and appeals. To keep the war going favorably, so to speak, requires enough of an American involvement to guarantee that all the evil effects of the war on American society, on the American economy and political system, and on American foreign policy would continue. A drastic curtailment of American involvement would increase the chances of a Communist takeover in particulary humiliating conditions; that is, through the overthrow of regimes set up and supported for years by US efforts, and without any compensation.

Given those alternative outcomes of a continuing war, the French believe that it is in America's interest to seek a negotiated settlement even though it would have to be on terms US governments have deemed repugnant. The French – with their own experience of negotiations with the Vietminh and with the Algerian FLN – do not agree with American officials on what constitutes humiliation. To the French, a peace settlement, even if it increases the chances for or acknowledges the possibility or even the likelihood of "enemy" control of the stakes, would be less humiliating than a political-military collapse accompanying or following an American withdrawal. For if face is what the US, like any major power, is concerned with, such a debacle would make the US look like Pontius Pilate, even though the Administration would argue that the ultimate responsibility, and blame, rested on the "Asian regimes" that fell, and not on the US. It is hard to believe that American prestige and the value of American promises would be preserved in the eyes of other non-Communist Asians. And it is also hard to believe that official rhetoric could sufficiently disguise realities to ward off that right-wing backlash at home which the Administration is said to fear, yet has done so much to provoke by escalating the importance of the stakes disproportionately. On the contrary, according to the French, only a negotiated settlement which draws the inevitable conclusions from the realities of Indochina, and gives up the attempt by the US to gain at the conference table what it has failed to achieve on the battlefield – secure non-Communist control – could grant to the US, in exchange for acknowledging this failure, various face-saving guarantees or delays. (To be sure, the French recognize that the other side too has failed to win on the battlefield, but Raymond

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Aron's dictum still applies: in a revolutionary war, the ebels win as long as they don't lose, the government ide loses if it fails to win).

Contrary to many American officials, the French believe that Hanoi would be willing to save America's ace in a settlement that would meet its two major lemands – a clear commitment to a total withdrawal of JS forces and the demise of the Thieu-Ky regime. The French think that Hanoi understands that such a withdrawal could not be instant, and that Washington could not tolerate the immediate setting up of Communist rule in Saigon, or Phnompenh, or Vientiane. In his speech in the Phnompenh stadium, in September 1966, de Gaulle stressed his conviction that the decisive prerequisite was the American commitment to a complete withdrawal. Pompidou took the same stand last July. The French realize that, in practice, the fate of the Thieu-Ky regime has become, since then, the biggest obstacle, that the US can hardly afford to look as if, in order to extricate itself faster, it did not hesitate to overthrow the very government it has protected and built up for several years; and that the US cannot allow the Vietcong to pick its own partners in a coalition, as the Vietcong peace plan of last September implies. But, on the one hand, the French think that Hanoi and the NLF will never want to deal with a regime that is committed, not to compromise, but to total victory; on the other hand, the French believe that a clear American policy of total withdrawal with a deadline would unfreeze the political situation in Saigon and lead to a change in the government there.

The French realize America's repugnance to force a coalition government on the South Vietnamese. But they believe that a Saigon regime geared to peace could find an accommodation with the NLF, and they remember how, in their own dealings with the Algerians, a similar issue was resolved, not by coalition, but by a temporary regime of "third force" figures acceptable to both sides. Precisely because the French recognize the importance of face for the side that has to give up its earlier goals, and remember the successful pressure put by outside powers (including, then, the two great Communist allies of Hanoi: Russia and China) on North Vietnam in 1954 – leading to concessions beyond what the French had hoped for, the French government has called for a new Geneva conference, instead of peace talks in which Washington and Saigon face only Hanoi and the NLF.

In the French view, Vietnamization is less a policy than a smokescreen – and one that risks blinding only the US. It postpones the moment of choice, between a settlement along the lines recommended by the French (one in which Hanoi's "demands" are – as Hanoi has suggested – taken as a *basis* for discussion), and a perpetuation of the war. By leaving the Saigon regime with the hope that America's presence will not entirely disappear, Vietnamization prevents any political change in Saigon and gives Saigon a formidable hold on American policy. It exposes the US to more Cambodias, each time one of the areas American policy tries to "save" looks threatened. The French know from their own experience that a postponement of tough decisions which does not alter the essential local realities proves ultimately costly, in lives, in missed opportunities and in worsened terms of settlement. They know that an apparent and celebrated improvement of the military situation is a delusion, if the political substructure remains rotten, if the enemy's main forces remain considerable, if all that is gained, temporarily, on the battlefield, is lost at home, and if locally the war, by itself, prevents the consolidation of one's own side and provides the enemy with the fuel he needs. They know that a carefully bargained settlement, embodying a balanced and coherent design, is more likely to serve America's prestige than either an inconclusive and brutal war, which does not help America's image, or an "*après moi le déluge*" debacle – the two possible outcomes of Vietnamization without a settlement.

Many West Europeans may, in past years, have been hastily critical of American values and institutions – they had "seen the future" and hadn't liked it, but they had no doubt that it worked, and they feared that its very success would overwhelm the old continent. Now, there are serious, often wildly exaggerated doubts about the stability and effectiveness of the American political and social system. That the French shortly after May 1968, the Germans not so long after Nazism, or the British still battling with stagnation, should express such concerns may seem ironic or insulting to Americans – and yet the Europeans' impressions are derived from seeing the US in the mirror which American politicians, news media, students, businessmen, military, veterans, hard-hat workers or union officials, offer to the world.

There is a growing worry about America's capacity to wage a national foreign policy. The way in which the Cambodian decision was taken, the rhetoric in which it was blown up, the repercussions it provoked in the nation, were all interpreted as ominous signs. Whereas the Administration used to defend the war as evidence of America's predictability (i.e. reliability), the Cambodian affair, in its conception and in its consequences, could not fail to be seen as a mark of unpredictability – and not of the sort that impresses and intimidates foes. Renewed bombings of the North, of Laos and Cambodia (understandable as a tactic to protect withdrawals, yet risking provocation of the very reescalation they aim at avoiding) and recent moves and pronouncements about US war prisoners have refreshed puzzlement and consternation. At a time when Western Europe worries greatly about the new Balkans – the Middle East – nothing could be more depressing than the evidence of confusion, illusion and oscillation which the latest avatars of Vietnam have so erratically provided.

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Stanley Kauffmann on theater

The Playboy of the Western World

(Vivian Beaumont)

Philip Bosco, as the drunken farmer Jimmy Farrell, bumps against the door as he lurches out of the Mayo tavern. The cant of Bosco's body in this small part and the transformation of his tongue into Mayo liquid, these are some of the theatrical high points in New York's Lincoln Center production of Synge's play. What Bosco gives us here, what he has often given us before, is the embodiment of repertory acting standards, an honorable ideal of authenticity, not flaming inspiration. Acting like Bosco's tells us only what we know already, but tells it truly; and his ability to tell us many kinds of truth, at this enjoyable level, is what repertory production usually comes to mean – at its best.

Bosco's soundness was foreseeable; there are also a few pleasant surprises. Stephen Elliott, who gave rather a cheap performance as Mr. Shu Fu in *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, is good granite as Old Mahon. Frances Sternhagen is as wrong in quality for her role as Katharine Hepburn was in the film of *Long Day's Journey into Night*, but Miss Sternhagen is such an intelligent and witty actress that she wins us sheerly with her understanding of the part.

John Hirsch, the director, has also had fair success with that unexciting young actor, David Birney, bringing him up to a reasonable facsimile of Christy, the Playboy. But he allows Sydney Walker to cavort like an Old Stager as the innkeeper, and he has not been able to bring out much power or charm in Martha Henry, the Pegeen Mike. I saw Miss Henry's Viola at Stratford, Ontario, in 1966 and since then, she seems to have grown only in confidence. The Irish accents come and go throughout the evening, which is not a matter of mere verbal décor, since the play lives in its words – its Irish words.

On balance, the production is better than most of the Lincoln Center productions: it is mediocre. This is not meant as a smart crack but as a statement of what seems to be true about this company and about most of our resident companies, as I have seen them. The best we can rationally expect of them is acceptable mediocrity, and it's the loss of that useful level of production that is a present danger.

To explain, circuitously, with Synge's play as instance. *The Playboy* is now part of the world's drama heritage, particularly to speakers of English. If it no longer looms as a major or revolutionary work, it is still a vivid example of the ethnic mode that was one way of revolt against the commercial theater at the turn of the century. (Although Synge wasn't precisely going back to his roots. He was a Dublin Protestant, like Shaw; and his best work was about the relatively wild, fiercely Catholic west of Ireland.) His folklorist approach influenced Brecht and, apparently, Lorca, and although his simplicities look different to us now (since the cultural environment has altered), they are never simplistic, never quaint.

The play's symbols, too, have been altered by time. Young Christy kills his father, he thinks, and becomes a hero in a strange village by telling the tale; when the father appears, Christy "kills" him again and "eats" him, in effect. A Jungian might say that, in 1907, when Synge wrote the play, he was reacting to deep unconscious patterns. Since Freud, the father-killing takes on more conscious meanings.

Even more pertinent to me at this juncture was the view of the "murder" itself. When Christy arrives and reports the killing of his father, he is idolized because these people believe that only great emotions can drive a man to crime and they admire great emotions. But when the wounded father tracks him down and Christy tries to kill him again, the villagers reject him. Pegeen Mike, the girl who once wanted Christy and now turns on him, says that "there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed." So the play not only dramatizes the contrast between the opium of fantasy and the bread of reality, it is concerned with the dominant theme of this century – the increase of consciousness and its burdens. In the very last line, Pegeen Mike mourns the loss of the Playboy, whom she has lost only by clearer perception of him, by an increase of perceived reality.

All right, then. As I've tried to show *The Playboy of the Western World* is of sufficient intrinsic interest so that everyone ought to have the chance to see a decent performance of it at least once in his life. This is true of hundreds of plays that none of us will ever see – even done badly – but that doesn't lessen the argument for *The Playboy*. (The immediate occasion here was the 100th anniversary of Synge's birth.) The question for the future is whether any remnant at all of that drama heritage is going to be preserved *in performance*. Anyone can read *The Playboy* and get much from it, but, figuratively, Philip Bosco's lurch is the completion of Synge's work. The problem is not the same as in musical performance because of the availability of the LP and the tape and because, as long as instrumentalists continue to be trained at all, they will be able to play Bach as well as Berio. In the theater, the quest for relevance among many young theater people, for contemporaneity, is taking many young actors and directors away from tradition, perhaps enabling them to play the theater's Berio but not its Bach.

Anyway, not as Bach. Every age does its revivals in its own way, but this age often seems to do its revivals not to keep classics alive and to connect us with history but to disconnect and appropriate them. Few today would argue that there is one "right" way to do a play, but at any given moment there is a consensus about the difference between a traditional revival – well or ill done – and a revival done according to some concept of specially modern relevance. Valuable juices would drain away if the latter died off; but our identities may wither if the former dies off. I'm not arguing for such mummifying as I've seen in the Moscow Art Theater and most of the Comédie Française. I would hope for such revitalized tradition as I've sometimes seen in the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theater of London, and the Stratford (Ontario) Shakespeare Festival. But I would settle, if forced, for the acceptable mediocrity of this *Playboy* production.

The question is by no means exclusively American. West Germany has

(Continued on page 35)

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Reed Whittemore: Wisdom and the Military

Studies in War and Peace by Michael Howard

(Viking; $8.95)

The great age of military history was the 19th century. Before that the military people didn't have enough clout to deserve attention as a separate social force; for example, "a study of the campaigns of Washington, Cornwallis and Burgoyne really tells us very little." And in the 20th century again, though in a different way, the military became only a small part of the big social scene; so that, to apply Napoleonic strategies to our time or to live comfortably now with the theories of Jomini, Clausewitz and the like is to betray, says Michael Howard, "a dangerous confusion of categories and a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of international affairs." But in the 19th century wars did take on the character that produced such theories:

> . . . the destiny of the state hung on the skill and judgment with which [the single commander] deployed his forces during a few vital days. The campaigns of Marengo and Austerlitz, of Jena and Wagram, of Leipzig and Waterloo possessed all the dramatic unities. Forces well matched in size and exactly matched in weapons, operating within rigid boundaries of time and space, could by the skill of their commanders and the endurance and courage of their troops settle the fate of nations in a matter of hours. Military operations were no longer one part in a complex counterpoint of international negotiation: they played a dominant solo role, with diplomacy providing only a faint apologetic obbligato in the background.

Yet it was in the 19th century – in the early part of that century mostly (for our Civil War, says Howard, was a preview of things to come) – that the military thinking of the 20th century was formed.

Much 20th century military thinking is unfortunately *still* back with Clausewitz, but Howard's thinking is not, and he is an optimist about the modernity of top-level thinking in the USA also. For example, he regards with respect the "massive deterrence" theorists of the fifties, starting with John Foster Dulles and working up to the various academics who bestirred their computers to produce the concept of a "stable balance," by which the US and the USSR would, with their ultimate weaponry, neutralize each other and thus become, however unwillingly, collaborators in the prevention of World War III. These theorists included Brodie, Kahn, Kissinger and other possible models for Dr. Strangelove; not only, thinks Howard, did they do more to tame the bomb than pacificists are willing to acknowledge (which is not to say that the bomb is tamed), but also they in effect removed the 19th century vision of war from before the eyes of thoughtful hawks everywhere. What we have now instead, so long as the bomb is truly neutralized (if it is), is a condition of continuing limited warfare, together with the incredible difficulty of achieving any even illusory peace. That isn't much, perhaps, but it's not Judgment Day (yet) either.

Where the Americans have failed of course has been in understanding the *kind* of limited warfare that the century of the Bomb has produced. On such warfare the wisemen, aside from Mao, are obviously now not the Americans but the French, as a result of their debacles in Indochina and Algeria. They have learned the hard way that revolutionary guerrilla war is far from a merely military adventure, and that to understand it one must always understand first the social and economic context of the war. Thus it is with the war in Vietnam that 19th century military theory – in the old narrow chessboard sense – has again been invalidated, but so has military thinking as sophisticated as that produced by the Kahns and Kissingers. As in the 18th century, the details of military campaigns are, by themselves, of little consequence – and, one might add, most of the "limited" plans emanating from the Pentagon and the White House have the chessboard look (e.g., Secretary Laird's recent proposal for a "new strategy of realistic deterrence" based on "improving" US non-nuclear forces. The proposal is frightening in what it implies is *un*realistic).

Howard's book is not a unified piece but a collection of essays written over a period of about ten years, a strange mixture of the battle of Waterloo and the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. It has only background value as a study of the military scene at the moment, but as a modest antidote to the thoughtless pacificism now surrounding us, as well as to our chessboard strategists, it serves well. Our new, instant ecologists might also have a look at it – for basically their contention is that we should stop imposing ourselves upon our environment and learn to live with it instead. Howard argues at length that the exercise of power is not so easily disposed of – it takes two to tango.

I had an eery feeling reading this book that I had been transported back at least two decades. In the late forties it was morally and intellectually respectable among my friends – graduate students, writers and young teachers, most of whom were fresh out of uniform – to talk strategy and tactics, to recognize the role of war and the military life in human affairs (with or without the Bomb), to assume that the ROTC and the draft and the Pentagon were with us like the weather, and to be rather scornful of the scattered COs and one-world types in the neighborhood who would not acknowledge elemental principles of force. One didn't have to be a hawk to be scornful; one could be as firmly opposed then as now to the arrogance of America's overseas postures of power – only allergic to utopian excesses.

The climate of opinion has now changed so drastically among young intellectuals that I am reminded of the wipe-outs that occurred regularly in the society of Orwell's *1984*. In Orwell the wipe-outs were controlled from the top, which could decide that what was history Tuesday would not be history Wednesday. What is extraordinary about the wipe-out I am talking about here is that the top (in the sense of a

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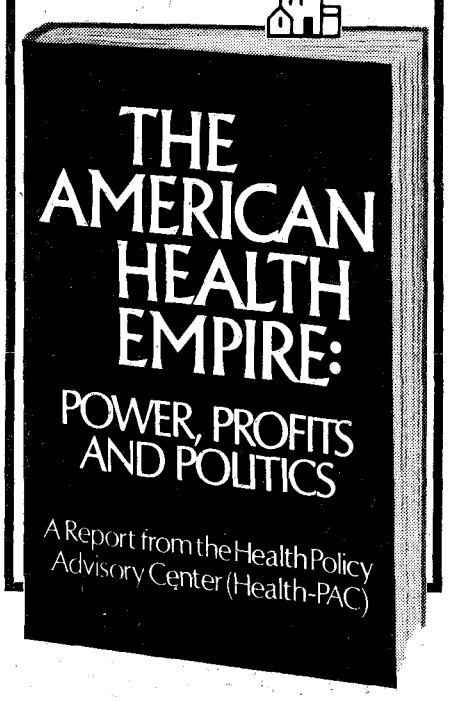

bureaucracy headed by a Big Brother) has had nothing to do with it, in fact has consistently opposed it. The wipe-out has occurred as a *reaction* to Big Brother; it was decreed by nobody but is as effective as if it had been.

For most young intellectuals now the whole mode of thought displayed by Michael Howard in *Studies in War and Peace* is sure to be out of bounds, a mode suited only for those persons unfashionable enough to sit around at, say, a military academy (one of Howard's essays was delivered as lecture at the Air Force Academy). Y this is absurd. The wipe-out process i profoundly anti-intellectual and il liberal, just as in Orwell; it has n place in the life of a free mind.

Michael Howard's volume is partic ularly deserving of retention, thoug it is out of the battered barrel of Con sciousness II. It displays a lean, toug objectivity, the kind that aspires to tel us not what we ought to be but wha we have been, are, and are likely to be

Louis Coxe: Unnecessary Books

Leaving Home
by Arthur Cavanaugh
(Simon and Schuster; $6.95)

Afternoon in the Jungle
by Albert Maltz
(Liveright; $5.95)

One Dragon Too Many
by Louis Field Cooper
(Knopf; $5.95)

The Assignment
by Martin Myers
(Harper and Row; $7.95)

Fourth Street East
by Jerome Weidman
(Random House; $5.95)

"Tell them in America," Ezra Pound wrote a good many years ago, "that poetry is an art." And Gertrude Stein observed that "remarks are not literature." Where are they now, now that we really need them? I for one can remember when the word "talent" meant Miss America. What is it now? Creativity. One-liners. Catches up to 22 and beyond. When it comes to fiction, to judge by the job lot we have here, I should say that some like it pop and some like it old but mostly they seem to like it dull. Let's get one more authoritative voice in here – E. A. Robinson this time: "by fate that gives to me no choice/I have the vision and the voice."

Preamble. What all these works of fiction lack is the "shaping spirit of imagination." Fate did not single them out. They have neither vision nor voice. They are, strictly speaking, unnecessary. *The Assignment*, Mr. Myers' exercise in ersatz Malamud-Roth-Vonnegut, has worked its dismal descent into Heller, and like that music that once went round and round, it comes out here, perfectly vulgar, a fraud so patent one is overjoyed to note that it is copyright by Martin Myers Enterprises Limited. No fair making the obvious joke: wait. Those Enterprises will do it for you. I mean: what can be done with a writer who has characters named – I tell God's truth – Betnwar, Dr. Plassibeau, Desiree Poodendim, among others too dismal to mention? Not since Major Major Major and Dreedle have we suffered such novelistic effrontery and self-gratulation. But let Mr. Myers' blurb writer (an Enterpriser, possibly?) out-Herod Herod, to be classy about it: "Is it a

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ovel? Or is it a disguised study of a hanging art form? It could be a ıodern retelling of an ancient Greek estaurant. Then again it might simply ›e a rehash of an old Roman ıizza. . . ." Shall I go on? No? Well, he blurb does but I spare everybody. ‹nd I'll tell you what it is: schlock. ıke real self-deluding, would-be commercial schlock but it surely can't make t moneywise; it's too dull. What am I aying? Obviously the author loves it, t kills him, and often that's all some eaders want. It's meant to be funny ›n an obvious plane within a standard ;enre. So laugh. You're on TV.

ʒut to move to Mr. Cavanaugh's *eaving Home* from *The Assignment* an give one the bends; don't risk it. The rewards are few and the injuries ıay be permanent. If Mr. Myers is ıod schlock, Mr. Cavanaugh is old-‹tyle corn, big-warm-bleeding-hearted. ʒrooklyn. The thirties. Mom. Dad. rish. Sensitive youngest child. Mom. ›mall tragedies. Large emotions. On a ıny scale. Mom. On the whole it has he great virtue of unpretentiousness, ›ut again, the book seems to make no ›lace for itself; I don't believe anyone ‹ould say he missed it when it was ;one – would in fact know it was gone. One could say the same of Mr. Maltz's ‹tories. All of them reach a level of ‹ompetence that assures the reader that hey can never rise above it. Not one ɔf the stories "makes it new" or gives us more than a sense of somebody with good liberal feelings from the 'thirties. And don't knock them; we ‹ould use more. But they do not take the place of the "shaping spirit of magination." They have nothing to do with the fate that gives to a writer "the vision and the voice."

Not one of the books discussed here would suggest that the writer has any great gift for fiction, any trained craft, any personal voice and view. All literature in some sense is – must be – a view of the world seen through a temperament. Mr. Maltz has no personal view, no vision, only opinions and ideas, some of them good and they do him credit but they cannot give us that sense of "felt life" which the art demands and which we demand of the art. Mr. Cavanaugh comes closer because he feels real affection, but he has no style, he has only stylistic tricks of the genre and the period. He has no voice.

Let us go quietly from the Creative Department. Of comfort no man speak. Though one can take some comfort in Mr. Weidman's sketches of the lower East Side in the twenties, if only because he denies himself the self-indulgence of falldown jokes and all the more currently common clichés of the Jewish novel. It is a professional job, the author knows what he is up to and goes about it efficiently and with no waste motion. Good entertainment. I cannot imagine anyone ever reading the book again but maybe it's too much to ask that a book tease one in such a fashion. Mr. Weidman knows his business as fictionist: he moves through each self-contained episode, makes his point and stops. No nonsense about gadgets – no Barthing or Butoring or indeed anything other than straightforward getting to the point. One can from time to time sense attitudes; they don't amount to a "position" or a view, really – more a tone of tough nostalgia, occasionally tinged with regret at the narrator's failure to understand his father's true quality before it was too late.

Now this it seems to me could make a fiction or series of fictions. Mr. Weidman, an old pro, knows that you got to have a hook to hang it all on. So, in her different way, does Mrs. Cooper; both know their business, have a subject, a theme, and can say what they mean. Why is it all unsatisfying in the long run? Too easy? Try it yourself and see how you do! But that's not the point. If you have the PR instinct then any old sow's ear will shape up for the top ten and Mike Nichols (Come back, Elaine May). No, a writer must decide whether he is a "god-damned writer," as Hemingway put it, or someone who has been touched – God's fool, in a sense. And how does one decide that nice point? It's out of a man's hands: fate gives him no choice. And there is the grave, by no means uncommon, risk: that he may misread fate's signals.

Poetry is an art. Writing really well demands the best. The best is none too good: praised for the wrong, ignored in its own time for the simple, painful reason that most people, most publishers in fact, do not like good work. They can tell it when they see it, often enough, but they resent it. Publishing used to be more genteel than most trades but it isn't any more (and small loss), particularly now that most of the houses are minor parts of large conglomerates and have more in common

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with the mass media than with "th vision and the voice." No wonde American writers in particular com monly resort to devices, parody an satire: they feel the compulsion to en tertain, to compete with skin flicks an "Laugh-In"; and buddy-boy that wil kill you rather than the reader, th reader who knows how to read.

Above all, mere readers, "viewers" and such will have – have always in sisted on – flattery. They like to thin of themselves, in this moment of time as emancipated, swinging lifestyle-hop pers who are far too hip to be moved too bright for elaborate effects. They leap ahead – they beat the author to hi end, they know his business far bette than he. Let him be standup comic an jester, or let him flash strobe lights i a witches' coven. As Jay Gould said "Nothing is lost save honor." An perhaps imagination. The capacity to "care and not to care," to imagine. Failures of imagination commonly bring about a search for substitutes usually in the form either of a kind of specious inventiveness or of mind less improvisation. Symbol becomes signal; metaphor image; simile or com parison, analogy. What unlucky teache has not had the student who says he does not read lest it corrupt his "orig inality"? What reader has not shed tears over the abortive literary experi ment made over and over again out of sheer ignorance? The contemporary revolt against technology, perfectly natural as it may seem, has a foul source: obscurantism. The contempo rary cult of the random collocation of images in poetry and of accidents in fiction shares that foul source. A real writer tests his material, style and voice against his experience: that is, by his knowledge of life and literature and by memory and desire. Memory, the mother of the muses, is the poet's deepest source, the prop of imagination, the place where he goes to listen and out of which he speaks. Writing which deserts life, repudiates memory and ignores experience may, like a dis cothèque, provoke sensations; it may, but the printed or written word exists for mind and spirit, and with these things sensation has nothing to do – sensation divorced from the shaping spirit. All writing is by definition metaphor – removal, distancing, doubleness of vision. It is based on the assumption that only the sidelong look, the view askance, will show what is there. What

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we stare at disappears.

None of what I've said should be taken as a condemnation of the new; there are writers of short stories today whose work, much neglected, is both "newer" and more fascinating than any recent novels I know of. But short stories still remain hard to write, unlike poetry which everyone writes or tapes and is nearly all so bad as to be funny, the way the poetry of provincial (and I don't mean Rural) America was in the nineteenth century, after Longfellow went to work. The novels I have talked about here are surely better than many Pulitzer Prize monuments, and worst sellers are often as bad as best. If you think *Love Story* is awful, remember *The Fountain*? You don't? Lucky. The seeming naiveté of the earlier literary disasters had no redeeming features and still hasn't; the same source polluted then as now. Bad Longfellow is no better than bad W. C. Williams, bad Tennyson than bad Stevens. Martin Tupper, meet Rod McKuen.

I find it of interest that no poet uses metaphor anymore – or only rarely. The reason why strikes me as obvious – and sad. No one can grasp the double view of man and the world, no one any longer has the power to believe and not believe at the same time – to be himself and the other, to look at reality – or as much of it as any man can – without childish rage or cynical disregard. Brains we got, every teaching aid in the whole sorry game, but Imagination – that mingling of vision, thought and feeling that Coleridge called the "shaping spirit" – we do not have. No metaphor, just images; no form, only parody; no satire, merely abuse. Of course everyone nowadays is creative, everyone's a poet, but new poet is only old Philistine writ large, and throwing pots butters no parsnips as Henry James observed. For a writer what counts is style, style with a blessing on it. How else can his writing discover what it is after and pursue it to the end? With poets in particular the voice, the language, the Word, in the old-fashioned sense, does the job and enables the poet to make poems instead of a lot of "poetry." Both poets and writers of fiction do not need the reverence accorded to Mick Jagger or Johnny Carson; what would they do with it? Turn somebody on? But they do need talent, in fact, genius with a specific talent attached. And they need to have a vision – not of themselves; no poet needs to find his "identity," only his vision and his voice. Let crystal-gazers, preliterate post-McLuhanites, Esquireens and grass-blowers meet their identity-crisis with a pass-fail option. Let the press and media men make suckers of the slobs. They can't even save themselves and we would not care to be incommoded with their help. Give the true writer his metaphor and fit audience though few. He won't save the world but he will remember it so that it can, with luck, be made again.

Saul Maloff: A Shadowy Romantic

Prosper Merimee by A. W. Raitt

(Scribners; $15.00)

Prosper Mérimée's scant renown in this country rests almost entirely on Bizet's "Carmen," which took Mérimée's famous tale as its source and – as is the way with adaptations – adulterated and distorted it not quite beyond recognition. Apart from that dim celebrity – which is to say as a name set in small type in an opera program – I'd guess knowledge of him is pretty much limited to college students of French Lang and Lit as the author of some anthology pieces and to students of Comp Lit as a rather shadowy figure in the history of some minor modes, le conte fantastique and romantic tales of primitive passions in exotic places (Corsica, gypsy Spain, the imagined primeval forest of Lithuania).

In general, he has always been a character in other writers' biographies

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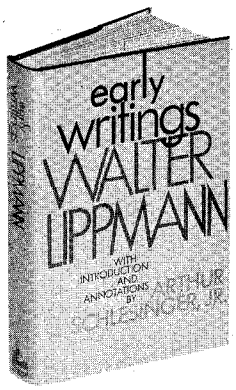

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– Stendhal's, Musset's, Sainte-Beuve's, George Sand's, Turgenev's, more marginally Flaubert's (as the cuckold in L'Education Sentimentale of Flaubert's friend Du Camp), the painter Delacroix's; a man who commanded attention, knew everybody, frequented all manner of beds as well as the best salons; and who having early established a fairly formidable reputation as a writer, abandoned literature, which he had never wholly trusted in any case, and, being variously gifted and wildly energetic (as well as a lifelong bachelor), went on to a number of other careers. A handful of his tales are still eminently readable, not to mention his extraordinary letters and his yeoman's translator labors in introducing some of the great Russians to France – and Mérimée's is a life that cannot be permitted simply to disappear into the vast limbo restively occupied by secondary figures. The centennial of his death is now fittingly observed by the English literary historian A. W. Raitt's earnest, careful, rather equivocal and not wholly satisfactory critical biography.

Mérimée backed into literature, and that with only one foot. Some dramatic pieces (pseudonomous but well-advertised) written in his earliest twenties provided a sufficient basis for a polite fame, which was widened if not deepened by the kind of Romantic literary hoax familiar enough to the time: another pseudonomous volume but this time of verse, a collection of fake folkloristic Illyrian ballads, studded with local color gleaned from books, and allegedly composed by the notorious, wonderfully named Dalmatian bard-outlaw "Hyacinthe Maglanovich." The hoax, called *La Guzla*, was clever enough to convince, among others, Mary Shelley (whom Mérimée had courted to no effect), who translated some of it, as did Pushkin, the Polish poet Mickiewicz, and Goethe's friend, Wilhelm Gerhard.

Fine as his best tales are, he could never exceed them either in scope or depth. His strength lay in a drastically time-bound manner of Romantic tale – the unleashing of an explosive, operatic passion in a vivid, remote, strange, "primitive" landscape. But the destiny of French literature lay in other directions, which were beyond his talents and alien to his temperament. Ideas made him uncomfortable; the long arcs of feeling, the elaboration of complex relationships, the close scrutiny of society, and a strong taste for the commonplace, the interactions of these – in short, the burdens of a novelist – never engaged his interest. Never mind that he thought ill of Goethe, and despised the windy lyric raptures of Hugo. He also was shocked by his inseparable friend Stendhal's unfortunate taste for the sordid and trivial in *The Red and the Black*. He condescended to *Madame Bovary*, loftily conceding the younger writer a certain talent, but deploring his appetite for unsavory realism. For his taste, even his friend Turgenev's work showed a regrettable weakness for realism. What had all this to do with literature? Gogol, some of whose work he translated, repelled him. And Baudelaire, to whose defense he came when *Les Fleurs du Mal* ran into the Law, offended him deeply. No, no, no, he assured the lady who reproached him for lending his name to a base cause – approval was no part of his intention; it was just that others were still worse; why single out Baudelaire? Conservatism in literature accompanied in him a growing conservatism in politics.

Such squeamishness seems very strange in Stendhal's devoted companion in whoring, and even more so in a man who was not only a tireless womanizer but compulsively obscene in his letters and ordinary conversation – in salon and cafe, whorehouse and country house indiscriminately, swapping dirty jokes and stories with traveling salesmen met by chance at a country inn and brutally inflicting them on, say, the fastidious Turgenev. An Anglicized dandy who dressed English and cultivated the stereotypic manner of aristocratic aloofness and icy, impenetrable reserve, this Mérimée needs more convincing accounting for than his biographer provides; as does the Mérimée who spent the better part of two decades in abject adoration of Mme. Delessart, who held him in thrall both before and after discarding him for Maxime Du Camp. Raitt makes a great point of his sub-

COMING

Saul Maloff reviews
Dealing
by "Michael Douglas"

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ect's taste for humorless obscenity, nd is obviously himself deeply hocked by it; but it doesn't help much o be told that this was "partly a need o compensate for his failing sexual owers," and it helps still less to be old that it was "much more a way of affling others, of jolting them out of heir composure while preserving his own equanimity. Thus he revenged imself on society for the constrictions vhich it imposed upon him." That Raitt should feel the need to stretch for some sort of key is understandable, but this is desperate, and unavailing. So is the dreary platitude "insecurity," the cant analytic term that accounts for everything and discloses nothing: the old ironist and skeptic who, though he despised the Academy, cravenly campaigned for election to it; the old "liberal" turned court jester, as Hugo called him, to the Empress Eugénie and Napoleon III, a fawning courtier and resident intellectual amusing a frivolous court with fatuous little theatricals. Much earlier, after Mérimée had become Inspector-General of Historic Monuments, Stendhal had noticed that his old companion of goatish nights had grown pompous and pedantic, and thereafter dropped his old pet-name for him, "Clara" (why *that*, Raitt does not say), and referred to him as "Academus" and "His Pedantry M. Academus."

To his great credit Raitt doesn't yield to the biographer's temptation, which must be especially strong in a centennial year, of making exaggerated claims for his subject. For all his talent and versatility, Mérimée's final claim on posterity – ourselves – must rest on the tales; and once it has been granted that he wrote some splendid ones, at a time when the form remained to be established, and that he pointed the way to later writers, little remains to be said. Though greatness lay beyond his means, he was one of those men who provide the texture, depth and interest of the second rank, a "figure" interesting in his own right and inescapably present in an incomparably great period.

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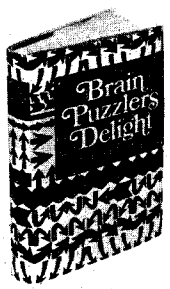

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Scott Elledge: Rhetorical Rearmament

Now Don't Try to Reason with Me by Wayne C. Booth

(University of Chicago Press; $6.95)

The title of the book is the caption of an old *New Yorker* cartoon showing a wife arguing with her husband. The wife is making a good move – she is changing the game. And if her husband plays her game, he can win only by force. Since her words do not constitute a proposition, and cannot, therefore, be part of a rational argument, no rational reply to her utterance is possible, though her husband may try to stick to his game plan and hope that the voice of reason, if not its words, will bring her around (now is no time to try candy or kisses). The cartoon is an emblem for the current debate between those who want to capture the universities (and other establishments) and those who want to continue to hold them; for a large part of the strategy of the revolutionaries, on campuses as well as in courtrooms, has been to refuse to play the establishment's game. To refuse to negotiate is to refuse to reason. If you refuse to meet arguments with propositions, you force your opponents to yield or to use force. The rhetorical arsenal of nonrational arguments contains a variety of similar weapons, all pretty effective in guerrilla warfare against a power that has only the slow-

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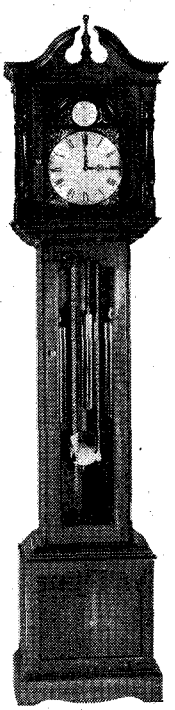

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moving defenses of reason, convention, and law. They are nifty little weapons, lightweight, easy to handle (children master them quickly), fun to use, and safe (unlike rational arguments, they can't blow up in your face); and you can make them yourself more easily than a molotov cocktail. You don't need electronic gear or psychedelic paint to produce a good put-on – just haul out a nazi flag at the right moment, or write an outrageous paragraph for the college newspaper. You can answer arguments by glaring or by smiling, by laughter or jeers, or by inattention. Or you can even pretend to argue with real propositions, provided they are oversimplifications which you can utter in a few seconds but which may take your opponents hours of rational argument to disprove, during which time you can leave the room or go to sleep. Just tell your opponent that what he means by reason is "only rhetoric," or that reasoning together is really a device for talking a simple question to death. Or you can accuse and confuse your opponent not by propositions but by softly worded requests that he try just for once to tell the truth, or to listen to his heart if he can no longer hear the voice of a higher morality.

The situation of the husband in the cartoon looks hopeless. If he solves such disagreements by force, his wife will accuse him of treating her as if she were his student, and she may riot or leave; and if he simply gives in, he will soon want to leave her. If the marriage (domestic or academic) is to survive, the husband must realize, if he is in the wrong, that "a brutal and irrelevant argument can cover up or violate fundamental needs or feelings while seeming to have all right on its side"; and whether she is right or wrong, the wife must decide to speak in the voice of reason as well as to listen to it.

Wayne Booth, Professor of English at the University of Chicago, and former Dean of the College there, does not predict how the great confrontation will turn out. The revolutionaries' ammunition is inexhaustible, their potential numerical superiority overwhelming, and the fuel to feed their motives plentiful and explosive. The academic establishment's weapons (like those of the law) are few and cumbersome, its positions and strongholds almost untenable against current modes of attack, its ranks weakened by a few who wish they were young enough to be fighting with the guerrillas, and its reactionary supporters or the outside even more dangerous than its professed enemies. Booth's hope is that the voice of reason and the sheer love for the exercise of reason will retain the appeal they have always held for civilized women and men, and that the universities will soon become once again quiet, apolitical sanctuaries for students, teachers, and scholars.

No doubt it is sometimes more satisfactory to shout "Bullshit!" than to try to meet arguments that seem contemptible – even at this late date it occasionally stuns the opponent, to say nothing of the fast, fast, fast relief it may bring to the tensions and frustrations of the shouter. But the effects on both sides wear off quickly, and nonrational dialogue soon becomes a bore. Sooner or later the mind will demand rhetorical rearmament – rational tones and rationally ordered ideas that can lead to reconciliation. It's a great temptation now to look for sanity and salvation in the language of reason. *Absurd* comes from a Latin word meaning "harsh sounding."

It's the tone of the argument that gives distinction to this collection of essays and academic addresses, for Professor Booth's earnestness is graced by wit, irony, and generous humor. And if his case for reason, reasonable discourse, and the disinterested quest for truth consists mainly of the classical arguments that are most effective with those who share his assumptions, it is nevertheless a persuasive case by virtue of what Aristotle called "ethical proof," a form of persuasion that derives from a speaker's ability to win his audience by sounding like a good man who knows what he's talking about. Revolutionaries, in their hatred and sense of outrage and urgency, may not be able to hear him. But many of his uncertain colleagues in the academic world will listen and be encouraged to keep their trust in the humane power of reasonable rhetoric, to act with the authority of professors who know their subject and believe in its worth, and to stick to their own game, played by their own demanding rules.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

LOUIS COXE *teaches at Bowdoin College,* SCOTT ELLEDGE *at Cornell University, and* SAUL MALOFF *at Hunter College, City University of New York.*

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Television

A Ream of Dream

"The Great American Dream Machine" is now on the air (Wednesday nights, NET), a big venture in every way, a strange mixture of commerce and love. Part of it consists of Naderesque reformism (the first show contained complaints about the synthetic ingredients in a lemon pie, and the drug advertising in medical magazines; the second blasted away at Pentagon propaganda, and foods that are sold as fun, like Koolaid), and part of it is racy social commentary (shots of a "demolition derby," a talk-and-giggle about football with Joe Namath, and weekly conversations about Life with a group of barflies led by Studs Terkel). In the extensive promotional material sent out about the program, one of the executive producers, A. H. Perlmutter, has proclaimed that the program is definitely not just another magazine of the air. "We don't intend to duplicate 'First Tuesday' or 'Sixty Minutes.' " But if I were to call it something other than a dream machine I do think I'd settle on magazine.

It's a high-powered machine, run by high-powered, ex-commercial-TV bigwigs, who have hired appropriately high-powered writers and actors. After the first few programs, perhaps it will simmer down; but at the moment it is the most overproduced dream in television. The pace of the individual sequences is hysterical (the result of frenetic cutting); the background music and the camera work are artsy-tricksy (nothing is allowed just to happen, except perhaps in the barroom sequences); and the cruelly repetitive insistence upon the dream theme is a kind of heavy-handed evangelicism only Mad Ave could contrive (just the opening-titles bushwa takes about five minutes). Right away I began to question the seriousness of the production: too stagey.

Take the reformist sequences, for example. On Ralph Nader's own series of programs – which this new series partly replaced – there was no obvious staging at all; there was simply the commentator, speaking directly at the camera, and reenforced by shots that illustrated the statements he made. But on the "GADM" the producers have obviously feared anything so plain. They hired Nicholas von Hoffman, who is the least plain journalist in the land, and with him and modern technology they set out to make Naderism fit for Radio City Music Hall. As von Hoffman talked about drug advertisements, the drug advertisements were flashed in front of us in a variety of hotsy-totsy ways – the camera panning in and out, the text fluttering and shimmering, and sexy music bouncing in the background. Then in conclusion von Hoffman read, in his best scare manner, statistics about deaths by drugs in this country. In other words the demonstration lacked the depth and specificity of focus for which Nader is justly famous, but compensated for its shallowness with razzmatazz and extravagance of statement.

On the second show the sportswriter Dick Schapp played the von Hoffman role, blasting away, between Namath's giggles, at pro sports with a heaviness of irony that made me grieve for the poor old jocks. With both Schapp and von Hoffman we have, I think, a manifestation of the most depressing side to our recent revolutions: the gold rush to capitalize on the whole counterculture mystique. There are much worse instances, such as publisher Lyle Stuart's upcoming "Anarchist Cookbook," with recipes for making bombs, but TV is relatively new to the racket. With the "GADM" it is trying to catch up.

The show has interesting moments of comedy – a fine parody of Julia Child, for example, with a comic cooking a "heritage loaf" in a way that reminded me of Scott Fitzgerald's famous turkey recipes – and it certainly has enough energy and talent aboard to do remarkable things. I hope it will do them. Furthermore, there is a daringness about it (a TV show that really bites the feeding capitalistic hand) that will outweigh, for many observers, the vices of manner and motive I complain about. Yet I think complaint is in order. These vices undermine the program's integrity, and bring up with force the crucial question of how much NET and its affiliates can borrow from the dream machine of commercial TV without bolixing up their own machine.

The question unfortunately does not appear crucial to the program's producers. They seem to have decided that so long as the program can be successful in a) attracting an audience, and b) carrying a number of reasonably important non-commercials to that audience, then it is absurd to worry about whether their success has the old commercial look about it.

Yet their conscience does keep bothering them; they keep throwing in solemn antidotes to the commercial look, such as the astonishing appearance, in show #2, of Henry Steele Commager. There he suddenly was, the old prof, delivering a straight classroom lecture on the American Dream. Surely his presence was dreamed up as a peace offering to my kind? I think so. It was testimony that the show was, despite contrary evidence elsewhere, on the up-and-up. Educational. Worthwhile.

Well, I will agree that the show is

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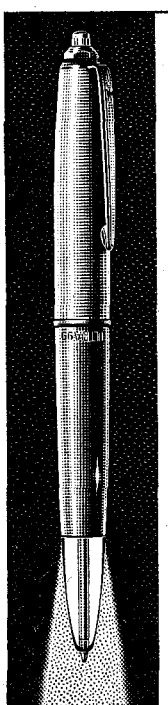
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mostly on the up-and-up. I will add that I think NET and its affiliates are doing at the moment a remarkable job of mostly *staying* on the up-and-up. And they are doing it while competing with commercial TV with more and more success. That's grand. (And I certainly don't want everything on the tube to be conspicuously worthwhile.) Yet I don't like to be bribed by Professor Commager (and I suspect he will not like to be used as bribe) into mistaking an elaborately contrived fireworks display for serious, felt statement. Shut them pinwheels off, gents; let the dream speak.

Sedulus

Correspondence

Reviewing the Reviewer

Sirs:

In the December 26 issue, your reviewer, Roger Starr, includes *The Man Who Rode the Tiger,* my biography of Judge Samuel Seabury and his investigation of Jimmy Walker and Tammany corruption in the 1930s. Viking has just reissued it as a Compass book in the field of Political Science.

I have no quarrel with your choice of Starr as a political reviewer, though he is discredited even in his own field of housing because of his advocacy of the peculiar notion that new luxury buildings are the way to solve New York City's housing crisis. City Councilman Carter Burden says that Starr believes in a "sterile ghetto of high-rise luxury apartments." Henry Hope Reed, Jr., Curator of Central Park, describes Starr as a writer of "astonishing naivete, who finds little purpose in saving landmarks."

There should be some responsibility to the book under review, for the sake of the reader. In this respect let me point out only two facts in his review of *The Man Who Rode the Tiger:*

Fact 1: He devoted his entire comment about the book to Judge Seabury's handling of the Becker case in 1914. The Becker case occupies 2½ pages in a 384-page book, which is mainly concerned with Tammany corruption and Seabury's successful effort to make Fiorello La Guardia Mayor of New York.

Fact 2: Mr. Starr says that the book is "now reissued with a moral introduction about pollution." Starr's statement is totally false. The new introduction to this college edition is about the relationship between modern corruption in its "legitimate" forms and corruption in its more conventional forms in the past. I defy Starr to find the word "pollution" – or anything about pollution – in the introduction.

I believe these two facts expose Starr in the book reviewing field as he has been exposed in his own.

Herbert Mitgang
New York, NY

In reply . . .

I discussed Mitgang's book. Instead of discussing my comments, he "discredits" me, whatever that may mean, by offering fragmentary quotes from two people who did not like what I wrote on other subjects, at other times. He grossly and deliberately misrepresents the writings with which these other readers disagreed.

If we are not to discuss Judge Seabury and Tammany Hall, why are we corresponding?

While Mitgang did not mention the word "pollution" in his prefatory chapter, the chapter dealt with the general subject of industrial abuse of the common environment. Mitgang ascribes this environmental abuse to "corruption," which, by definition, means that it must be susceptible to a moral cure; to conscience, for example. I disagree. The abuse of the environment by industrial production implicates not merely a few individual "corrupters," but all of the participants in an industrial society, consumers and workers as well as capitalists. Applying to this complex a "cure" based on a simple moral imperative will accomplish very little, I am afraid; and in the fullness of pride, like Judge Seabury's in the Becker case, it may strike down the wrong party.

Roger Starr

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Televised Nader

Sirs:

Sedulus, in his comments on the Nader TV series (Jan. 9), sounds like an armchair radical from a 1930s socialist salon. After praising us for a "fine new series," he condemns us for not being more ideological in our critiques. Specifically he chides us for failing to intersperse our studies of corporate irresponsibility with explicit attacks on the concept of private ownership and capitalistic profit. Leaving aside the question of whether public ownership, as Sedulus suggests, is an answer to the problems we raised (pollution is as much a scourge in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and the state-controlled industries in the United Kingdom as in the United States), what would be the utility in these programs of the ideological posturing he proposes? Does Sedulus really believe that public understanding of corporate tax evasion, pollution, advertising fraud, and company towns would be advanced if we endorsed his political ideals?

As Sedulus' review illustrates, the old radical ideologues are curiously ambivalent about the new breed of public interest advocates. They praise them for finally "doing something," but at the same time, constantly pressure them to make sacrificial rhetorical gestures which distract from the work at hand. The goal of the Nader series was to give people the confidence to act, to counter the feeling of powerlessness which keeps people from converting their critical insights into operational technique. We do not have to take our viewers on a one way trip to the Finland Station to make this point.

With regard to our study of pollution of the Savannah River, Sedulus puts us in the company of latter-day Luddites trying to turn the clock back on the Industrial Revolution. We were not quite that ambitious. Our study of the pulp industry (*The Water Lords,* to be released Jan. 21) showed that it was economically feasible for Union Camp to recycle its wastes and purify its effluent without going into receivership or forcing the federal government to go into the paper business, as Sedulus suggests. . . .

Harrison Wellford
Washington, DC

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n reply:

Who needs enemies when they have llies like Mr. Wellford? I did not put im and Mr. Nader in the company of onservatives except with dozens of ualifications that Mr. Wellford chose o ignore. I must insist that the Nader eries was an excellent one – though t appears Mr. Wellford doesn't want ne to have liked it – and I certainly ope it will be renewed. As for being n armchair radical, but of course. What other kind of radical could a TV ritic be?

Sedulus

Political Goals

Sirs:

Tom Kelly (Dec. 26) dismisses the arguments of Andrew Greeley ("Take Heart from the Heartland," Dec. 12) by stating, "To Daley and the machine the political goal is preservation of jobs and power." He later on ascribes the same "sin" to "the machine boys in the South." Would Mr. Kelly like to name any sane politician who does not have the same *political* goal? Is the death-wish now to be mandatory?

He further states that blacks are not fully represented among the office-holders of Chicago. Are they in New York? Or anywhere else? If a black leader, or any other ethnic leader, were ever to publicly declare that the demands of his followers were adequately met, he would be promptly consigned to a rest home. He surely would not be trusted by the Daley machine or by any other set of men with their heads on straight.

Thomas H. Clancy
New York City

Courage

Sirs:

In your comments on "political courage" ("Courage," January 2 and 9) you state that "the hazards in America . . . are not so critical." True enough for the instances you cite – the activities of Senators McCarthy and Gore, or even Morse and Gruening – when contrasted to the rebellious spirit of a Polish worker or a Soviet artist. May I remind you, however, that more than one individual has lost his life in the battle for civil rights in this nation and that thousands of young men are tossing their futures to the wind by resisting the draft and going to prison for their beliefs. The struggle for equal rights for all Americans and the effort to preserve America from becoming a militaristic society require courage of the highest order. It is understandable that you do not find courage in American life when you look for it in the United States Senate. Look a little harder and I think you will find that there are still sufficient opportunities "to put one's life on the line" without "young romantics" having to create them.

Robert Bender
Bronx, New York

Kauffmann, *from page 24*

170 theaters, most of them subsidized by states and cities, and François Bondy reported recently (*New York Times*, Jan. 4, 1971) that those subsidized theaters are moving in three directions. One of those directions is particularly German: plays examining the national conscience vis-à-vis the Hitler experience. The other two directions reflect the American schism: one toward the living museum of the drama heritage, the other toward experiment. Of the second, Bondy says:

> The fashion now is for classical plays, from Aeschylus to Goldoni, turning them inside out in order to reveal their unsuspected revolutionary message and to give the spectator a thrill by having him discover that the best-known old plays can be made into something new and unfamiliar.

They surely can be, in Germany and elsewhere, and sometimes stimulatingly, but if there is no tradition, no museum, what are they being "new" against?

The difficulty in the theater, obviously, is that its museums are not a matter of purchases that virtually settle the matter, as with paintings, but of living people continuously "making" the collection with live work. Even if cassettes are to crystallize plays in performance, trained people will be needed for them, and none of the best plays will be settled once and for all by one cassette any more than the *Eroica* was settled by one recording. The ultimate purpose of our resident theaters, as it's turning out, may be to serve as competent living museums – if they can survive the disappointment of our expectation that they were going to serve more purposes; and if succeeding generations of good actors and directors and designers want to devote themselves to sustaining the viable past.

Every age gets the theater it deserves, I guess, but use every age according to its deserts and which should 'scape whipping? Every age doesn't always get the theater it needs or wants, and I'm not overjoyed by the thought that we may be the last generation to see even a mediocre production of *The Playboy*. It's not that we must pray for future Oliviers; there doesn't seem to be too good a prospect for future Boscos.

Personals

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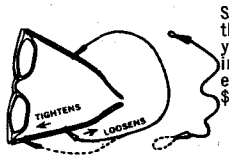

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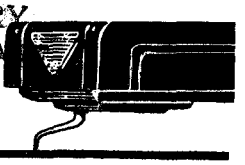

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